A

Minister's Counsel

TO THE

YOUTH

OF HIS

PARISH,

When Arriv'd to

Years of Discretion.

Recommended to the Societies in, and about *London.*

BY

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Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way,
Psal. 119. 9.

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THE

PREFACE.

WE have of late had ſeveral Uſeful Diſcourſes publiſh'd, concerning *the Education of Children*, in order to the laying the Firſt *Foundation* well: I pray God they may have the intended good Effect!

But, tho' a Religious and Prudent Management of Youth *Betimes*, is of Infinite Conſequence, and gives 'em many happy Prepoſſeſſions,

and no Care in the Conduct of it can be too great; yet, 'tis but too too often found, that All is ſoon defeated, when young Perſons become their *Own* Governours, and are left to their *Own* Diſpoſal.

I therefore thought it might do ſome Service, to carry on the ſame Pious Deſign a little *further*, and give ſome few Advices, whereby *Manhood* likewiſe might receive an early Biaſs to what is truly Religious and Good; and Innocence and Happineſs run thro' all the Stages of this Life, and end at laſt in the Bliſſes of Eternity.

What

What is here publiſh'd was prepar'd at firſt for the uſe of thoſe under my own Care, and deliver'd to them in ſeveral *Diſcourſes*: But hopeing it might be ſerviceable to others too, I determin'd to ſend it abroad.

I'm very ſenſible, That to the following Advices I might have added more; and ſome, it may be, will wonder that I have not; but I was loath to ſwell the Book to a *diſcouraging* Bulk, conſidering that 'twas deſign'd for the Peruſal of *Young Gentlemen.*

As

As for my Choice of *these*, I hope 'twill justifie it self; and I have endeavour'd so to manage them, as might best engage their Attention to whom they are address'd, and give a right Seasoning to the Minds of those, who are the Hopes of the *Present* Age, and upon whose Virtue and good Principles very much depends the Religion and the Happiness of that which may *Succeed* it.

Happy shall I be, if in any measure instrumental to so great a Good as this! But 'tis God alone that gives the Increase, tho' an *Apostle* be the Planter.

His

His Bleſſing, therefore, I moſt humbly beg, upon what is ſincerely intended for his Service, and the Publick Benefit!

Adverti ſement.

A Courſe of Lectures on the Church-Catechiſm. By *Thomas Bray*, D.D. Recommended as proper to be Read in Families. Price Five Shillings.

ERRA-

ERRATA.

PAge 4. line 3. r. *the.* p. 8. l. 7. r. *implies.* p. 15. l. 18. r. *Temper.* p. 23. l. 19. r. *into.* p. 31. l. 21. r. *Altar.* p. 33. l. 11. r. *Complexion.* p. 44. l. 22. r. *Devotion.* p. 55. l. 20. r. *walk'd.* p. 74. l. 21. r. *Distraction.* p. 80. l. 10. after Present make a [:] p. 92. l. *ult.* before *Company*, r. *next.* p. 95. l. 14. r. *News.* p. 114. l. 18. after *wicked* [:] p. 130. l. 8. r. *Comport.* p. 133. l. 13. after *Sincerity* [:] p. 141. l. 15. after *us* r. *But.* p. 160. l. 8. r. *keeps.* p. 161. l. 4. r. *Importunate.* p. 170. l. 19. r. *Ears.* p. 174. l. 24. r. *whom.* p. 181. l. 7. r. *his.* p. 183. l. 6. after *Number*, instead of [.] make [,] p. 186. l. 18. r. *Circumstances.*

A

Advice

ADVICE
TO
Young Gentlemen
Arriv'd to
Years of Diſcretion.

THE Beginnings of Manhood are ſo beſet with Temptations to what is Ill, from unexperienc'd Liberty, full Poſſeſſion of Eſtate, Vigour of Nature, Warmth of Paſſion, and the like; that more than ordinary Care is needful to manage all this well, in the midſt of a World full of Wickedneſs, Deceit and Flattery, and as yet untry'd: And all the Aids

of Reaſon and Religion will not be too much, eſpecially when 'tis conſider'd how great an Influence the two or three firſt Years of a Man's *Own* Government have, upon the Happineſs of his whole Life to come.

Religion, no doubt, is the Rule in General, by which we All, both Young and Old, muſt ſteer our Courſe, in order to our Happineſs; and which we ſhall find to be the beſt Reaſon too; but becauſe the Age and Circumſtances of ſuch as are newly freed from the Inſpection and Reſtraints of Governours and Tutors, and beginning the World upon the Stock of their own Prudence and Diſcretion, require a ſuiting and adapting ſome Particular Advices to them, I recommend theſe few that follow to their attentive Conſideration; in hopes, that by God's Bleſſing, the employing their Firſt Thoughts and Blooming Reaſon upon ſuch Serious Subjects, may give their Minds a right Taſte and Reliſh, and make ſuch laſting good Impreſſions, as will be of unſpeakable Advantage in their future Life. *The*

The Firſt Advice.

AND *firſt* of all, 'tis very adviſable for them ſometimes to call to mind that they are *Creatures*; That an Infinitely Wiſe, Powerful, and Good Being made them what they are; That the Powers they have of Thinking, Acting and Enjoying, are all his Gift; and as the Life they have already Liv'd, and all the Bleſſings of it, are owing to His Goodneſs and Support, ſo every Minute of their Life to come, and all their Hopes and Expectations, depend entirely upon His Care and Providence, who Governs and Diſpoſes all things which He at firſt Created. Advice 1

Such Reflections as theſe, if at all dwelt upon, and purſu'd any thing home, will Imprint ſo *Aweful*, and with all ſo *Lovely* an Idea of God upon the Mind, and give a Man ſo true a No-

tion of Himſelf; as will be a Great Security againſt thoſe many Miſcarriages incident to Youth, and be the Groundwork of an Excellent Religion.

So long as they remember, that upon *God* is their whole Dependance; that every thing they Love and Delight in is deriv'd to them from Him: The Quicker Apprehenſion young Perſons have of the Excellency of their Nature, and the Plenty and Happineſs of their Circumſtances; the fonder they are of their New-ſpringing Life; the more they are ſenſible of the Bleſſings that ſurround and ſmile upon them, and pleas'd with the Proſpect of many Happy Years to come; the more Reaſon will they find to Admire, and Love, and Praiſe the Divine Author of all this, and endeavour ſtill to continue in His Favour, and by no Means to forfeit His Bleſſing, by any Inſtances of Diſobedience.

No Argument can be more engaging to Exact Duty, than ſuch a one as this: "My *All*'s at ſtake, I muſt "be

" be Govern'd, or I'm undone; All I " enjoy I have from His Bounty who " commands me this; and if I loſe his " Favour, he withdraws his Bleſſings, " and I ſhall no more enjoy any thing. " Beſides, the Guilt of baſeſt Ingrati- " tude will for ever lie heavy upon " me, ſhould I deny Obedience to my " greateſt Benefactour; to whom I owe " whatever I delight in, and even my " very Life.

" If Infinite *Beauty* and Infinite *Good-* " *neſs* will not command my utmoſt " Services and ſincereſt Love, what " will? And where can there be more " perfect Beauty and Excellency, and " greater Goodneſs, than in Mine and " the World's Creator! who hath com- " municated Being and Happineſs to " all the Univerſe, and by whoſe " Bounteous Hand we are all ſupply'd, " with abundant Plenty of our proper " Good!

For the ſame Reaſons therefore that we love *any* thing, we ſhall find our ſelves ſtrongly engaged to Love our

Creator infinitely more; and *Imitation* and *Obedience* will naturally follow True *Gratitude* and *Love*. So that

Would Young Perſons be but perſwaded, as the Wiſe King Adviſes, Thus to *Remember their* Creator *in the Days of their Youth*; That *His Hands have made them and faſhioned them*; and trace their Life and their Happineſs up to its Eternal Spring: And would they do this ſeriouſly, and not too ſeldom, what Religious Affections would it not excite?

Eccleſ. 12. 1.

What Self-Annihilation, and Humbleſt Thankfulneſs; content in every *Change* of their Condition, and Modeſty and Moderation in their greateſt Proſperity! What Admiration at the Divine Wiſdom, and Power, and Goodneſs, and entire Reſignation of themſelves to all his Diſpoſals, and reſolv'd Conformity to all his Pleaſure! And what a happy Influence upon their future Life, ſuch a Temper of Mind as this would have, is not to be expreſs'd.

The

The Second Advice.

BUT Secondly, Let them Remember too that they are *Chriſtians*; the Diſciples of Jeſus, that Eternal Son of God, *the King of Glory*, who is the Saviour of the World. Who, from a moſt deplorable Condition into which Mankind had plung'd themſelves by Sin, by his Bitter Sufferings in their ſtead, and cruel Death upon a Croſs, Redeem'd and Rais'd them up to Infinitely Happy Circumſtances, and moſt Glorious Hopes. And that upon this Reaſonable Condition only, that they Believe what He has done and ſuffer'd for them to be ſufficient to their Salvation, and truſt in it as the only Meritorious Cauſe of it; and give full Aſſent to the Great Truths He hath made known to them, and carefully obſerve what He hath commanded, in the Goſpel Revelation. All which was en- Advice

gag'd for them in their Baptiſm, or Admiſſion into this Happy Society, and which they have ſince Agreed to and Ratified in their own Perſons, at their Confirmation.

There is no Title in the World, that carries with it ſo much *Honour*, implys ſo much *Happineſs*, and reminds of ſo much *Duty*, as that of *Chriſtian*.

Rom. 8. 14. &c. It beſpeaks a Man a Friend and a Favourite, nay a Brother of the Son of God, receiv'd by Adoption into the ſame near Relation to the moſt High; an *Heir of God, and Coheir with Chriſt* of Eternal Glory in the Higheſt Heavens.

1 Joh. 3. 2. Where he ſhall be made *Like* to his Heavenly Father in all his Communicable Excellencies; and in the Boſom of Jeſus for ever enjoy the moſt conſummate Felicity. And all this from a ſtate of Enmity with God, and open Rebellion; which had deſervedly brought His Curſe upon him, made him the Object of the Divine Hatred and Vengeance; which would have made him extremely Miſerable to Eternal Ages, had

had not the moſt Compaſſionate Jeſus made an Attonement with His Blood, and Introduc'd this wondrous Happy Change.

But then, what Vaſt Obligations lie upon all Chriſtians for ſuch Amazing Favours as theſe!

As firſt, ſo far to know themſelves, as to Live ſuitable to the High Honour conferr'd on them by God; which the Apoſtle ſtiles *Walking worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are call'd*, and not to Degrade themſelves by vile and ſinful Courſes. If God has rais'd 'em from ſo Low and Miſerable, to ſo Glorious and Happy a Condition, 'twill be Inexcuſable Meanneſs of Spirit, and contrary to all the Principles of Honour, to become Slaves and Drudges for ſuch pittiful baſe things in compariſon as the Objects of Senſe, and the Enjoyments of Brutes; and forgetting their Treaſure in Heaven, the Crown that awaits 'em there, employ all their Thoughts and their Diligence, upon the Trifles of this Earth. Eph. 4.1.

Again;

Again; If they are the *Purchaſe* of the Son of God, Redeem'd by the Ineſtimable Price of His moſt Precious Blood, from the Extreameſt Miſery; there's all the Reaſon in the World, that they ſhould entirely Dedicate themſelves to His Service, as no longer their *own*, and *Glorify* that Bleſſed Saviour of theirs *with their Bodies and their Spirits which are his.*

1 Cor. 6. 20.

Would a Slave, ranſom'd from the Mines or Gallies, think much for ever to ſerve and obey his Redeemer!

Would a Wretch, condemn'd to the Rack or Wheel, there to be Tortur'd to Death, think any thing too much to do, for that dear kind Man, who procur'd for him his Pardon! Can his Life and his Liberty be employ'd better, than in doing him Honour, to whom he owes both! And how would our Blood riſe againſt that ungrateful Wretch, who would take no Notice of all this; or at moſt, return a few cool dry Thanks, and refuſe ſome eaſy reaſonable piece of Service that was

was requeſted of him, or put it off, till he had nothing elſe to do!

What Love and Duty then can be enough, to the Great Saviour of the World, from Miſery infinitely greater than the moſt witty Malice upon Earth could e're invent, and which too Never, Never ſhould have End; and who, beſides, has rais'd us to a State as Glorious and Happy, as that we are redeem'd from, would have been Wretched and Miſerable!

And can we think the moſt Compaſſionate Jeſus, who underwent ſuch barbarous cruel Uſage, and loſt his Life in Torment for our Sakes, would e're require of us *unreaſonable* Things? No, no; All His Commands are Holy, Juſt and Good, contriv'd on purpoſe to carry on the Gracious Deſign of making us both now and ever completely Happy; and that at length, we may have full Poſſeſſion of what he has purchas'd for us.

That he may ſee the Bleſſed Effects of the Agonies and *Travel of his Soul*, and conduct

conduct his little Flock (which Mens own Obſtinacy does make ſo little) into the bliſsful Kingdom of his Father;
Joh. 17. 24. *That where he is there they may be alſo,* and *behold* and partake of *his Glory.*

How can we better ſpend the Prime and Flower of our Age, than in the Service of ſo Good a Maſter, and who himſelf did lead the way; perform'd what he requires of us; and made his excellent Precepts look ſtill more lovely, by the Luſtre of his own Example!

Nothing can more commend the True Nobleneſs and Generoſity of our Spirits, than in the midſt of thoſe Temptations which ſurround us at our Firſt Entrance into the World, to Remember our Obligations to *Jeſus* our Beſt Friend; and freely lay our Fortunes, our Strength, our Reaſon, our Affections, our very Life, down at his Feet, to be entirely Govern'd and Directed by him; who once, as great a Perſon as he was, ſubmitted to Poverty, ſuffer'd the greateſt Hardſhips, and e're he arriv'd

riv'd to *half* the Age of Man, became a Sacrifice for *us*.

Certainly we can't but think this highly reaſonable; eſpecially ſince we are ſo firmly engag'd to it by the moſt Solemn Promiſes and Vows; which every Chriſtian, we know, *as ſuch*, lies under.

And therefore, unleſs we think that *Youth* will excuſe us from every thing of this *Serious* Nature, and that the Promiſes we make to our Creator and our Saviour, are of leſs Regard than thoſe we make to Men; we muſt, upon all accounts of Honour and Juſtice, as well as the Reaſon of the Thing, apply our ſelves, and that with the ſooneſt, to be as good as our Word, and conform our Faith and Practice to the Goſpel Revelation; as being the Condition, neceſſary to be perform'd on *our* Part, in order to our being finally the better for what Chriſt has done on *His*. And that ſuch is the Condition, no grown Chriſtian, that has been duly inſtructed in his Religion, (as we all along

along ſuppoſe thoſe to be, to whom theſe Advices are given) can be to learn.

The Third Advice.

Advice 3. OUR next Advice therefore to Young Perſons ſhall be, relating to their Chriſtian *Faith*; or in what manner they are to give their Aſſents to the Great Truths revealed to us in the Goſpel.

And but too much need there is of Advice in this Caſe, in an Age when 'tis accounted a great piece of Folly and Meanneſs of Spirit, ſtrange Credulity, unbecoming Rational Creatures, to *Believe* any thing that they cannot fully underſtand and *Comprehend*; whereby the Aweful *Myſteries* of our Holy Religion, which make it to *be* what it *is*, and diſtinguiſh it from all others; by the ill Arts of Sophiſtry, far-fetch'd Gloſſes

Gloſſes and Interpretations of Men over-confident of the reach of their own Underſtandings, are brought down even to nothing, and made Contemptible.

But if this be not the very Height of Prophane Arrogance, what is! 'Tis the Deſtruction of all Divine Faith, and the greateſt Ridiculing of Religion, when the moſt exalted Truths of it ſhall be twiſted about and diſtorted acccording to Mens extravagant Fancies, and made to ſubmit to the Imperfect Reaſonings of every Bold Intruder, that is *Wiſe in his own Conceit.*

The Advice of St. *Paul* therefore is Highly needful to be recommended to all young Perſons (whoſe forwardneſs and warmth of Temper makes 'em generally too apt to graſp at every thing, and confide too much in their own Wit and Parts) St. *Paul's* Advice, I ſay, is very neceſſary for all young Perſons in this Age of Religious Scepticiſm and Infidelity, which we have in 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Let no man deceive himſelf; if any man among you ſeemeth*

ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wiſe. That is, they ſhould ſo far *diſtruſt* their own Reaſon, in things of ſo Sublime a Nature as thoſe we are now ſpeaking of, as to move with the greateſt Caution and Modeſty in their Enquiries about ſuch Truths as theſe. And tho, as 'tis fit they ſhould, they make the beſt uſe they can of the Underſtandiug God has given them, and endeavour by all due Means to Brighten and Improve it; yet ſtill, *Revelation* ſhould be valu'd as the ſureſt Guide, and all their own Notions humbly ſubmitted to it.

For, conſider a little; Does not common Experience aſſure any Man that will attend to it, how very Imperfect Humane Reaſon is at beſt? Don't we daily find that every Man's Underſtanding is of a very narrow Capacity in this World, and that in things much more within our *Reach* than the Depths of our Religion are?

Now let any ſenſible Man ſay, which is the moſt rational Courſe for a Man, contrary

contrary to his own manifold Experience, and that of all the World, to centre in *Himſelf* in his Enquiry after Truths of the moſt exalted Nature; or in a due Senſe of the Defects of his own Reaſon, to be very Diligent in ſeeking out, and making uſe of better Helps, and readily Aſſent to them upon the Teſtimony of the Divine Revealer, tho' he cannot *Comprehend* the Immenſe Truth, no r ſay, *How* ſuch things can be?

The things we now ſpeak of, are ſuch, as are utterly beyond the Reach, not only of *Humane*, but perhaps of any *Created* Underſtanding; and which, as they cou'd never have been known by us at all, had not God been pleaſed to Reveal 'em; ſo, now they are Reveal'd, cannot be known perfectly and throughly, by any but the Divine Revealer. But now, every Man muſt needs confeſs, that things of ſo High a Nature, may be nevertheleſs True, for being Inconſiſtent with a poor ignorant Mortal's former Notions and Conceptions. That is in ſhort, an *Infinite*

Underſtanding may *Reveal*, what a *Finite* Underſtanding cannot *Comprehend*; which yet ought by no means to be an Argument againſt the Truth of the Revelation.

And who that is a ſincere Lover of Truth, but would moſt willingly embrace it, in what manner ſoever it might come to his Notice! How glad of greater Light in this Dark World, tho' for the preſent it may *Dazzle* his Undeſtanding by its unuſual Brightneſs, and make him the more ſenſible of the Darkneſs he was in before! Eſpecially, when aſſur'd, that it proceeds from the *Father of Lights, in whom is no Darkneſs at all*, who is the Eternal Source of Truth, Infinitely Wiſe and Good, that can neither Deceive nor be Deceiv'd, and *in whoſe Light above it is, that we can really ſee Light.*

Pſal. 36. 9.

'Tis worth our while to take Notice here of the Behaviour of our *Lord* and his *Apoſtles*, towads the too curious Inquirers into the Secrets of the Kingdom; who we ſhall find have met

met with a *Reprimand* from them, inſtead of any more Particular Satisfaction.

Thus when *Nicodemus* hear'd our Saviour Diſcourſing of the *New Birth* of a Chriſtian, and Interpos'd this Queſtion, *How can theſe things be?* He could have no direct Solution of his Doubt; our Lord only upbraids his Ignorance of what his own Religion might have furniſh'd him with ſome Notion of, and again affirms the Truth of what he had before aſſerted, and then Diverts to ſomething elſe John 3.

And at another time, when talking with the *Jews* about his being *the True Bread, that came down from Heaven,* and of the neceſſity of Eating his Fleſh and Drinking his Blood, if they would have the true *Life* and Spirit of Religion in them; He returns no other Anſwer to their Queſtion, *How can this Man give us his Fleſh to eat?* than by Affirming, that *His Fleſh and Blood were Meat and Drink indeed*; and how exceeding happy the Effect would be, John 6.

of eating the one, and drinking the other; and even to his own Disciples, all the Satisfaction he thought fit to give, so far as we can learn, was only this, *The Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life.*

When he discours'd of his being *the Son of God*, and *One with the Father*, and that from all Eternity, tho' in appearance but a mean afflicted Man; which exceedingly enrag'd the *Jews* against him, and urg'd them to Blaspheme: His way was only again and again to assert and affirm it, and demonstrate that it *was* so, by his Miracles; still leaving 'em in the Dark as to their Enquires *how* it could be so. And so for the Mystery of *Trinity in Unity*, which is plainly enough Asserted both by himself and his Apostles; neither he nor they, ever attempted the *Explication* of this Mystery, any more than they did of the rest.

Indeed St. *Paul* gives the *Corinthians* some Description of the *manner* of
1 Cor. 15. the *Resurrection of the Dead*; which yet must

muſt be allow'd to be One of the Great Myſteries of Chriſtianity: But then we may take Notice, that to the curious Enquirer, *How are they Dead rais'd up, and with what Body do they come?* He uſhers in his Anſwer, with this very plain Rebuke, *Thou Fool.*

Now, ſince our *Bleſſed Lord* and his *Apoſtles*, thus wav'd the giving any Particular Explications of theſe, and the like Myſterious Truths, which yet they would have given, had it been *needful*, nay, ſo much as *expedient*, eſpecially when ſo often urg'd to do it, methinks, it ſhould be a ſufficient Caution to every Man elſe, not to Intrude too far into *thoſe things which he has not ſeen.* What *they* thought fit to leave as *Myſteries*, to be only *Believ'd* and *Reverenc'd* by Chriſtians; methinks none that come after them ſhould offer to unveil; but chuſe to exercise their *Faith* about 'em, rather than their weak benighted *Reaſon*; and ev'n in the neceſſary *Defence* of them, follow the Scriptures as their ſureſt Guide.

And how happy would it have been for the Chriſtian Church, had theſe Depths been always venerated at a Diſtance! And that Quickneſs of Parts, and Warmth of Temper, duly employ'd in Provoking to Love and Good Works, and in *Confirming* more and more the Foundation of our Faith, which was abus'd in Digging up and *Deſtroying* it; and Ruining that *Charity*, without which, *tho' a Man ſpeaks with the Tongues of Men and Angels, and underſtands all Myſteries, and all knowledge*, St. *Paul* ſays, *He is nothing*.

1 Cor. 13. 2.

And if ſuch way of Proceeding in theſe matters would have been the trueſt Wiſdom in the Ages paſt, no doubt but it is ſo ſtill in this. The ſad Conſequences of the want of which, and crying up the contrary Practcie, of laying open all Myſteries, are but too well known. It has indeed expos'd Religion to Innumerable Wounds from all its Adverſaries, and tends more than we can imagine, to Atheiſm, and all manner of Looſeneſs and Debauchery.

Highly

Highly needful therefore is it to give our young Reaſoners Warning of ſo Dangerous a Rock as this, and perſwade them to avoid it. And before I put an end to this Advice, which is of ſuch mighty Conſequence, let me appeal to their own Unbyaſs'd Reaſon, Whether a Man would not be better, much better employ'd, in humbly and thankfully embracing, what God has been pleas'd plainly to Reveal to his Church concerning the *Incarnation* of his Divine Son; for Inſtance, *God Manifeſt in the Fleſh to deſtroy the Works of the Devil*; and in ſincerely endeavouring to Imitate his moſt excellent Example, and pay Obedience to his Holy Precepts, than in making curious and nice Enquiries into the Nature of the Perſonal Union, which the more it is pry'd into, the more Humane Wit will be confounded, and nothing in the Concluſion but a Pernicious Brood of Hereſies?

Does it not more become us heartily to rejoyce in the *Satisfaction* Chriſt has made for Sinners by his Bitter Death and Sufferings, and continually to pay

our Humbleſt Acknowledgements, and Devouteſt Praiſes, to God and Jeſus for their wondrous Love, and make it our great Endeavour to perform thoſe Conditions, upon which alone we can be Sharers in his Merits? Does not this become us better, than to raiſe ſubtile Queſtions, and be always Quarreling about the *Nature* of that Satisfaction; and in the Scuffle commit ſuch Wickedneſs, as will render it unavailable, if perſiſted in, to thoſe that are ſo unchriſtianly engag'd?

The like may be ſaid of the Myſtery of the Adorable *Trinity in Unity*; concerning which, Thus much I may ſay, I hope, without Offence, That to be contented with what the Scriptures have plainly told us in this matter, and to give all Honour and Glory, Love and Obedience, to the Great Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of the World, *God Bleſſed for evermore*, is more agreeable to the Piety and Humility of a Chriſtian, than to tear the Church in pieces, and give the Enemies of our Faith too much occaſion to Blaſpheme

and

and Ridicule it, by ſo fiercely oppoſing one another in our Explanations, of what will be an Inſcrutable Myſtery when we have done all.

Finally, I may add, That he is much the wiſer Man and better Chriſtian, who with all due Awe and Reverence, and Preparation, frequently Adreſſes himſelf to the *Holy Sacrament* of the Body and Blood of Chriſt, and endeavours, in good earneſt, to keep the Pious Reſolutions he then makes; than he who perplexes himſelf, and diſturbs and embroyls the Church, about the *manner* of our Saviour's *Preſence* there, and of our *receiving* him. And I can't but think *Solomon*'s Counſel in *this*, as well as other Caſes, to be very excellent, and worthy of our greateſt Regard; *Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own underſtanding.* Prov. 3. 5.

The Fourth Advice.

Advice 4. HAVING thus endeavour'd to ſecure the *Faith* of young Perſons; the next thing to be taken care of, is, their *Obedience.*

Now the Main Spring of this, is a *Devotional* Temper of Mind, and a Quick Taſte and *Reliſh* of good things; whereby we become fully perſwaded, that 'tis not only our *Duty*, but our greateſt *Intereſt*, upon all Accounts, to be Religious. This will make us employ our Thoughts, our Deſires and Affections, upon Divine Objects in Good *Earneſt*, and Quicken us on in the ways of Chriſtian Vertue, with Satisfaction and Delight. Whereas, when Men are Cool and *Indifferent* to things of this Nature, Religion ſoon degenerates into bare *Formality*, and from thence decays into *Nothing*.

The

The great Buſineſs then, is to engage the warm Affections of Youth upon *Religion*, before they are too far taken up with other things; to turn the ſtream of their Paſſions into the right Channel *betimes*, before they are Habituated to ſome other Courſe; nothing being more Difficult than when they are ſo, effectually to direct and keep 'em right.

My next Advice therefore is, That they would cheriſh that Natural Diſpoſition to *Devotion*, which is in moſt young People, before it is Deſtroy'd and Quench'd by Vice.

Now by *Devotion* I mean, "A ſet-"tled Temper of Mind, ariſing from "a Due and Lively Senſe of the Su-"preme Excellency of God and Reli-"gion; whereby we entirely dedicate "our ſelves to his Service in the way "he has directed; and in all things "endeavour, and that with Warmth "and Spirit, to behave our ſelves to-"wards him, as befits both him, and "our ſelves.

I have given this Deſcription of it, that we may know how to Diſtinguiſh it from *Superſtition* and *Enthuſiaſm*, which are the two Mimicks of Devotion, and often borrow its venerable Name: And 'twill not be amiſs, if before we proceed any further, we conſider a little the Several Parts of this Deſcription, in order to our Forming right Apprehenſions in a thing of ſo great Conſequence.

Firſt then, True Devotion *is a Settled Frame and Diſpoſition of Mind*; or ſuch an *Habitual* quick Senſe and Reliſh of Divine Things, as is ready to exert it ſelf in Proper Acts upon Juſt Occaſion, and Converſe with God in Pious Thoughts and Deſires; or Diſcourſe of Pious Subjects, *pro Re Nata*, as Things offer themſelves, and that with a kind of natural Freedom, Eaſe and Pleaſure, as a Man talks *with*, or *of* a Friend, or any thing elſe; that he Admires, Reverences and Loves.

Our ſeating it in the *Mind* is to ſhew, that

that thoſe who place it in any thing that is *external*, are miſtaken in it; and the greateſt Bodily Severities, the Life of a Hermit, Pilgrimages, and Prayers, and Preſents, tho' made to the greateſt Favourite of Heaven, Pomp and Splendor in Religious Worſhip to the higheſt Degree, and the like, all this is not *Devotion*, for that's ſeated *within*; and if the *Mind* may all the while remain *Dead* and *Cold* to Religion, as certainly it may, we muſt then call it by ſome other Name.

For the ſame Reaſon *Devotion* does not conſiſt in *Rejecting* all this, and converſing with Heaven only in hollow Sighs and Groans, without any *outward* Expreſſions of it at all; unleſs it be ſome odd convulſive Motions, which are to ſhew, it ſeems, as ſome will have it, the mighty Force of the Impreſſions made within upon their Spirits. Men may be equally devoid of a truly Pious and Devout Temper and Diſpoſition, that *over-value*, or utterly *cry down* ſuch *outward* Religion as this: And 'tis always a ſign of Mens not knowing

knowing what True Devotion is, or elſe of their real want of it, when they are fierce and eager about what is ſo *foreign* to it; whether it be *for* or *againſt* it, is all one. Again,

We ſay 'tis a *ſettled* Frame of Mind; that ſudden *Heats*, and Flights of *Fancy*, and bold Pretences to great Familiarities and *Intimaces* with God, expreſs'd in long and warm Diſcourſes with him, accompanied with Melting Accents, an eaſy Flow of Words, and Geſtures full of Ecſtacy and Rapture, and it may be Tears too, that ſuch *Fits* as theſe may not be taken for *Devotion*.

If a Long Prayer would beſpeak a Man Devout, then the *Phariſees* were ſo; who yet, as ſoon as Grace was ſay'd, Devour'd the Houſes of the Widow, and were, in our Lord's own Judgment, the very worſt of Men. And as for the other *Ornaments* of Devotion, they are partly Nature and partly Art, for which Men are beholden to their Conſtitutions, and to frequent Uſe and Practice; and there are abundance of Inſtances

ſtances of very bad Men, who have Pray'd like Angels, when, at the ſame time, they were carrying on the moſt Helliſh Practices.

Warmth and *Fervour* relating to things Sacred, no doubt does highly become us, and will be in ſome meaſure where true Devotion is, and 'tis what we are now perſwading to; and nothing in the World can be more apt to excite it, nor deſerve it more, than the wondrous things of our moſt excellent Religion. But then it ought to be conſider'd, that even *this* is not *Devotion*, but only an *Attendant* of it, a Bodily Paſſion that is ſtirr'd up by it; altho' it may, and does *react* upon the Mind, and heigthen and encreaſe that which is truly ſo.

Thus the Fire that is brought to the Altar, firſt *enkindles* the matter to which it is apply'd; but then, that again adds *Strength* to the Flame, and makes it more vigorous and bright, till the Sacrifice becomes *a whole Burnt-offering*.

All

All Tempers are not alike, nor are the *beſt* always equally in *Tune*; ſome are ſo Cool and Quiet, that nothing can Warm 'em to any ſort of Paſſion; others, on the contrary, immediately ſet on fire by every thing. In ſome the prevailing Mixture is Heavy, Melancholy, and others are Lively, Brisk, and Forward, which muſt needs cauſe great Variety in Mens outward Expreſſions of Religion; but to draw Concluſions from hence, as to the Inward Diſpoſition of their Souls, is of very Dangerous Conſequence.

This indeed may be ſaid, that thoſe who are naturally *Warm* in every thing elſe, as young Perſons generally are, 'tis an Ill ſign, if they are not ſo in *Religion* too; and the Colder a Man's Temper and Conſtitution is, the more ought he to endeavour to Chafe, and Warm, and Inſpirit it, that he may proceed more chearfully and feelingly in his Religious Duties. But after all, *Senſitive Paſſions*, or the Ferment of our Blood and Spirits muſt not be call'd

Devotion

Devotion, which, as was ſaid, is a *Divine God-like Temper of Mind*, and entire Reſignation of our whole ſelves to God, in the midſt of our cooleſt Thoughts and calm Deliberation, nay of our greateſt Aridites and Dejections of Spirit. In ſhort, as an excellent Author neatly expreſſes it, *It does not come and go like the Colours of a Bluſhing Face, but is the natural and true Complexion of the Soul.* Dr. Scot.

The Laſt Part of the Deſcription of True Devotion wich I gave, tells us, That the Service it pays to God is in *the Way that he has directed, and in a manner agreeable to the Divine Nature, and our own.*

By this is excluded, in the firſt Place, all *Superſtitious* Expreſſions of Religion, ſuch as the Roman Fopperies we mention'd before. For tho' outward Reverence be highly becoming in all Religious Exerciſes, eſpecially in Publick; yet it ſhould be ſuch as is *Worthy of God*, and may *encreaſe*, as well as *expreſs*, the Devotion of our Minds; that ſo

we may Glorifie the Infinite Majeſty of Heaven *both with our Bodies and our Spirits, which are his.*

Now *God* is a *Spirit*; and *Man*, is *Rational*, and his *Creature*; and therefore his Devotion and his Worſhip ſhould be *Rational* and *Manly*, *in Spirit and in Truth*; Sincere, and iſſuing from his very *Soul*, as touch'd with the moſt Aweful Sence of the Infinite Excellency of God, and the vaſt Diſtance of even the nobleſt Creatures from Him; eſpecially of a vile ungrateful *Sinner*, who is the Object of his Anger and Hate, and ſhould therefore humble himſelf to the very Duſt before him, and be fill'd with deep Impreſſions of Shame and Self-abhorrence in all his Addreſſes to him. Which yet, the Wondrous Expreſſions of his *Love* to Mankind, in our Redemption by the Blood of Jeſus, ſhould clear up into Praiſe, and Joy, and Love, and higheſt Admiration at that *which paſſes Knowledge.*

But

But for a Chriſtian ſo far to conſult the Affecting of his *Senſes* in Religious Worſhip, whether by a multitude of glittering *Ceremonies*, by Bodily *Pain* or *Pleaſure*, or any thing of *this* Nature, as that he can attend to little elſe; I can't but think to be a very odd ſort of a Devotion, and ſuch as betrays unworthy Apprehenſions of the *Divine* Nature, in thinking he will be pleaſed with ſuch Performances; and no leſs of our *own*, when we place our *Devotion* in them.

And no leſs unworthy of God, and unbecoming our ſelves, is the other Extreme, of *rejecting* all *Order* and *Decency* in Religious Exerciſes.

It deprives *him* of that Publick Honour and Homage, which 'tis fit the Lord of Heaven and Earth ſhould receive from his Creatures and his Vaſſals; and quite takes away all *Face* of Religion out of the World: Which yet, when in Conjunction with the Religion of the Mind, he has often

declar'd himſelf well pleas'd with; and expreſly *commanded* his Peculiar People to pay him, and was their Director in the manner how, and never has forbid to any ſince.

And nothing certainly more unbecoming *us*, poor Sinful Duſt and Aſhes! and who had been extremely miſerable, but that the Mercies of our God were Infinite; nothing more unbecoming us in our Addreſſes to him, eſpecially in Publick, than to confine within our *Breaſts* the Sence we have either of his Majeſty or of his Mercy.

Rather with all humble Poſtures of our Bodies, and grateful Expreſſions of our Lips, ſhould we declare to all the World, and glad of an Opportunity to do ſo, that there is an Infinitely Excellent, tho' to us Inviſible, Being, to whom we owe all that we are, and have, and hope for, and to whom all poſſible Adoration and Praiſe is due.

And till of late, this was the Sence and Practice of all the World. But one

one Extreme generally produces another; and too *much* of outward Religion in ſome, has been the occaſion of none at all in others: Both equally unreaſonable, and far from true Devotion.

As for *Familiarities* and *Intimacies* with God, they are likewiſe utterly condemn'd for the ſame Reaſons as before, being only an Argument of Mens unmeaſurable Boldneſs and *Confidence*, and that they very little underſtand, or *will* not underſtand, either God, or themſelves. True Devotion, is the moſt Humble, Modeſt, Decent thing in the World; and is always attended with Reverence and Godly Fear. And therefore ſuch Men would do well to conſider that Paſſage, *Luke* 13. 25, 26. where we find the Door is ſhut upon thoſe, who, with great Aſſurance, could knock and cry, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*; and plead great *Intimacy* too, *We have eat and drunk in thy Preſence, and thou has taught in our Streets*; but ſtill the Door continues ſhut, and this Killing Anſwer given 'em, *Depart from me, I know, you, not whence ye are,*

ye workers of iniquity. And then it follows, *There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth, when ye ſhall ſee* Abraham, *and* Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *and all the Prophets*, Perſons peculiarly remarkable for their Great *Modeſty* and Humility, and profoundeſt Awe and Dread of the Divine Majeſty, and that tho' the Higheſt Favours were ſhown to them by God; when ye ſhall ſee theſe in the Kingdom of Heaven, who were far ſhort of you in their Pretences to it, *and you your ſelves thruſt out*, as Bold and Confident Intruders.

There is one more Miſtake in this matter, which it will not be amiſs to take notice of; and that is, of thoſe who are mightily for Blending Religion with *common Converſation*, putting every thing into a Religious Dreſs, and make this a great Argument of a Devout and Heavenly Mind.

Now tho' I readily grant, that where there is True Devotion, innumerable Hints and Opportunities will be taken to dart up Pious Thoughts to God, and

Holy

Holy Aſpirations, and nothing more acceptable to him, nor a more becoming, and grateful, and beneficial Employment of a Chriſtian's Mind, and which I would therefore earneſtly recommend to the Practice of all good People, as the Beginning of their Heaven upon Earth: Yet Devotion being a *Rational* thing, all the outward *Expreſſions* of it to Men muſt be guided by *Diſcretion*, and made uſe of only in proper Times, and upon juſt Occaſion. But now, *every* Time certainly is not proper, nor *every* Occaſion juſt for things of ſo Sacred a nature as is this we are ſpeaking of: And at every turn, right or wrong, to wedge in a Religious or Scripture-Sentence, and affect to ſpeak nothing but the Language of the Temple; is the ready way to *cloy* Men with Religion, and make them nauſeate the moſt Holy Things. And what has ſuch a Tendency as this, is a Strange kind of Devotion; very Indiſcreet, if not much worſe.

Having thus Conſider'd the Deſcription we gave of true Devotion, in or-

der to the preventing ſeveral great and dangerous Miſtakes which are often made about it; before I proceed to Recommend the Practice of it to young Perſons from the great Benefit and Pleaſure that attends it, I can't but take notice, how true the Devotion of the *Church of England* is; and how infinitely to blame, and without Excuſe, thoſe of her Communion are, if not truly devout.

Her Doctrine relating to it, is what we have now explain'd; and 'tis founded on the Nature of God and the Nature of Man, conſiſting in what is highly agreeable to each, and excluding Mens Private Fancies and Humours, Superſtition and Enthuſiaſm, and every thing that is unbefitting either God or our ſelves. And as for the Manner of expreſſing it, in *Private* we are left to our Liberty, provided we keep within the Bounds of Decency and Reverence. And in *Publick*, there is every thing that is needful to raiſe and increaſe true Devotion, and fix it upon its due Object, and make it look like

like it ſelf; but nothing to divert the Mind *from* its Holy Employment, and divide and weaken its Attention, or make it degenerate either into Sordidneſs and cold Indifferency, or an unbounded Liberty of Expreſſion and Behaviour.

How few, and how comely are her Ceremonies! Such as an humble Devotion would *chooſe*, were they not enjoyn'd; ſuch as expreſs with Decency, tho' without *Pomp*, the Inward Sentiments of a *Pious* Mind, and diſtinguiſh our Religious from Common Aſſemblies, and that's *all*. So careful is our Church not to give Offence, that altho' ſomething *more* of this nature would not be *too much*, yet *leſs* than ſhe preſcribes would be indeed *too little*.

Her Service I may truly call *Divine*; it being, for the main, collected from the Holy Writings; and the reſt taken out of the beſt Liturgies of the Primitive Church. Compil'd it is with excellent Judgment, expreſs'd in plain, but very proper Language, divided into

ſhort

ſhort, but comprehenſive Collects; with variety enough to *entertain* the Mind, and prevent its tiring; but not ſo much as to ſcatter its Thoughts, and tempt it to loſe it ſelf in unprofitable Wandrings. And where all we have to do is to bear our part in it with all the Warmth and Fervour that we can, and to which the Brevity of each particular Prayer does very much conduce.

As for the *Muſick* of our Church, (in Declaiming againſt which, many are ſo ſtrangely Religious, as to place a great part of their Devotion and Zeal, who really are Objects of our *Pity* as well as *Indignation*) no Man can expreſs to what a Pitch it wings Devotion, what Holy Flames and Ardors it excites, how it withdraws the Soul from Earth, and mounts it up to Heaven. Indeed, it gives the *Higheſt* Reliſh to Religion, and prepares the Mind for a due Reception of every thing that's good. The Pleaſure it creates is ſo Refin'd and Spiritual, that Fleſh and Blood can't *bear* it long; but faints, and almoſt dies away, as over-

charg'd

charg'd with Heavenly Delight. In ſhort, where there is never ſo ſmall a Spark, either of Natural or Religious Fire, *this* will Ἀναζωπυρεῖν, awake and blow it up into a vigorous Flame. 2 Tim. 1.6.

And now 'tis time to recommend to young Peoples greateſt Care the cheriſhing, and more and more increaſing that Natural Diſpoſition, which they generally have to Devotion, from the Conſideration of the great Benefit and Pleaſure that attends it.

To begin with the *Latter*. And indeed, True Devotion muſt needs be extremely *Delightful*, becauſe the chief Ingredient of it is *Love*. "Tis a willing Dedication of ones ſelf to God, "and a Warmth and Fervour in his Service, as a Being above all others infinitely Lovely; and both to our "ſelves and all the Creation, infinitely "kind and good.

Now there is no Paſſion ſo pleaſing and delightful to the Soul as *Love*. It carries *Pleaſure* in the very Notion of it,

it, and all Delight does neceſſarily ſuppoſe it. And therefore, *Devotion* and *Pleaſure* are as Inſeparable as *Pleaſure* and *Love.*

Indeed by Accident, Love may have ſome Mixture in it of *Uneaſineſs*; as when 'tis plac'd upon an Object empty and undeſerving, and which at length does therefore balk and diſappoint the Soul; or when the Object lov'd as yet can't be enjoy'd, which gives a Daſh of Perplexity and Fear. But the *Proper* Act of Love is *Complacency*; and which, when *God* is the Object, muſt needs be *Unallay'd* and Pure.

When, therefore, a Man has ſo Lovely an Idea of God, as entirely to *Devote* himſelf to him; and finds, that the cloſer he views him, and the more he knows of him, the more Beauties he ſtill diſcovers, and has his Devotion and Love ſtill more and more encreas'd: How will his *Delight* Proportionably grow with 'em! How will he applaud his happy Choice, and ſay with the Seraphick Pſalmiſt, *One day in thy Court*

Court is better than a Thouſand! Eſpecially when he reflects, with what Tenderneſs and *Endearment* all his Addreſſes are receiv'd, and repaid with the moſt Affectionate *Returns*. No forbidding State and Pride, no unreaſonable Reſerves, nothing that will damp and chill the Votary's Affection; but all the Sweetneſs and winning Charms, that are apt to encourage and invite, and then to crown the higheſt Pitch of Love.

So that Devotion is *Love Triumphant*; 'tis both *Deſire* and *Fruition:* Deſire that is ſure of *Succeſs*, and Fruition that fully ſatisfies, but never *cloys*. And were the Object is ſo infinitely lovely, the Love ſo entire, ſo pure, ſo reciprocal, and the Enjoyment ſo compleat; How truly *Heavenly* muſt the Pleaſure be! For what are the Felicities of that Glorious Place, but the Reſult of Devotion and Love! So true is that of Holy David, *Delight thy ſelf in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the Deſiresof thine Heart.* Pſ. 37. 4.

But

But, Secondly, the *Benefit* of a Devout Temper of Mind is as great as the *Pleaſure* of it; and that,

Firſt, Becauſe 'tis ſo *delightful.* No doubt but whatever will fix and *root* Religion in the Soul, and make a Chriſtian *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable in it, always abounding in the Work of our Lord,* ought to be eſteem'd as highly Beneficial; but now, nothing more certain to do *that*, than the Pleaſure and Satisfaction we receive from it; when we find by our own happy Experience at preſent, that our Pious *Labours are not in vain*; and are aſſur'd, that the delight we *now* have in Religion, tho' it be very great, is but as the Firſt Fruits of the full Plenteous Harveſt of Happineſs, which we ſhall reap from it to all Etenity in the Kingdom of God.

Devotion therefore making Religion ſo delightful, will make it *laſting* too; and when its Pleaſures have been ſo fully taſted by us, that the divine Reliſh of them is quick and lively upon

on our Spirits, all Attempts to remove us from it, will be as ineffectual, as the Daſhes of a Wave againſt a Rock.

But further: This devout Temper of Mind is highly Beneficial to us, becauſe 'tis the Living Fountain under God, of every good Thought, and Word, and Work. It warms the Heart with Seraphick Affections, ſends up Heavenly Breathings and Aſpirations to God, and fills the Mouth with *Hallelujá's*. It furniſhes the Cloſet and the Church with Prayer and Praiſe, and joins us to the Angelick Choir above. 'Tis this ſupplies the Penitent with Groans that can't be utter'd; with Holy Sighs and Tears, and lays him proſtrate in the Duſt; and then raiſes him up to New and Heavenly Life. This 'tis enkindles Zeal for the Glory of our Beloved, and engages our beſt Endeavours to promote the Intereſt of his Kingdom. In fine, this is the Life and Spirit of Religion, and derives it ſelf from no leſs Principle than the Spirit of

of God. *He* is the great First Mover, and *this* his Powerful Instrument.

So that the Devout Person is truly πεπαιδευμένος εἰς ζωὴν, rightly prepared and dispos'd to Eternal Life, and has the Seed of God abiding in him; that blessed Principle of Spiritual Growth and Improvement, which will in due time exert it self, till he comes *to the measure of the Stature of the fulness of Christ, and is throughly furnish'd and instructed to every Good Work.*

Nothing therefore is of greater Consequence to *all* People, but more especially to those who are *beginning* their Christian Course, than by forming in their Minds true Apprehensions of God and Religion, and a frequent Retreat from the World, spent in Meditation and Prayer, and Conversation with Books of Piety and Practical Religion; to preserve and encrease such a truly *Devotional* Temper of Mind, as will make 'em pursue with Life and Spirit the great Business of their Salvation.

The

The Fifth Advice.

BUT, leſt Warmth of Temper *alone* ſhould be taken for Piety and Devotion, (as it too often is) and Religion, by this means, degenerate into *Hypocriſie*, and outward Shew, and become Wordly and Deſigning, or at beſt humourſome and uncertain; 'tis highly needful to adviſe Young Perſons, carefully to take heed of *Inſincerity*: That their Affection to Religion be True and Hearty, fix'd and deep Rooted in their very *Souls*, and not made up of ſudden Flaſhes of Paſſion, and a few Fits of natural Enthuſiaſm, which are often made uſe of to the worſt of Purpoſes.

And, firſt, in General, let them conſider, That whoever is Religious indeed, his Aim and Deſign in the *Prac-*

tice of Religion, is ſincerely the ſame with that of our Lord in *Teaching* it; which was no other, than to Advance God's Honour, in the preſent and eternal Happineſs of Mankind: By making them Holier and Better, to render their Lives eaſy and comfortable while upon Earth; and capacitate 'em for the Happineſs of Heaven, when this ſhort Life ſhall end. Thus the Apoſtle, 2 *Tit.* 11. *&c. The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation to all Men hath appear'd, teaching us, that denying Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts, we ſhould live Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godly, in this preſent World: Looking for that Bleſſed Hope, and the Glorious Appearing of the great God and our Saviour* Jeſus Chriſt, *who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a Peculiar People, zealous of good Works.*

For this purpoſe then, our Holy Religion was taught us by the Son of God; and *True* Religion, no doubt, will effectually bring to paſs that for which it was deſign'd: And he that

is

is Religious indeed, *is therefore* ſo, that the deſign'd Effect may throughly be wrought upon him; in full perſwaſion, that unleſs it is ſo, his Pretences to Chriſtianity, however warm and forward they may be, will ſignify nothing; and he muſt never expect to be really Happy here, or to give a good Account of himſelf at the day of Judgment.

And conſequently, his great Care is to be Maſter of the Power and *Subſtance* of Religion, without which, the *Form* of it, tho' manag'd with never ſo much Decency, and Conſtancy, and ſeeming Zeal and Earneſtneſs, is really but a Piece of *Mimickry*, a Holy Stage-play, an excellent *Part* Acted by an Ill Man in Maſquerade. Which tho' perform'd never ſo much to the Life, is ſtill without *Reality*; and therefore indeed puts an Abuſe upon Religion, and robs God of his Honour, defeats all his Gracious Intentions for our Happineſs, and will be very Tragical in the Concluſion.

This in General. But more particularly, in the first Place, Let young People have a care of putting on Religion, either as a thing of *Custom* only, an Ornamental Dress, to recommend them to the Good Esteem of the World, and get them Reputation; or to bring on Business and Preferment; or, which is still worse, as a Cover to vile Practices, which must be disguis'd before they can be put in excution.

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ligious Performances, (which is the Sum of what is there diliver'd in this matter) and then, *Thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.*

But if he further deſigns it as an Inſtrument of Wordly *Gain* and Advancement, or a Diſguiſe for thoſe Ill Methods which he intends to take in order to them, this is rank Hipocriſie indeed. And not only the Phariſees of Old, but very many ſince, have ruin'd Kingdoms, as well as private Perſons, by Prayer and Faſting, and the Semblance of an extraordinary Devotion. In ſhort, he whoſe Religion is not at leaſt as great in ſecret, in his Cloſet and his Bed, when only God can ſee it, as 'tis in Publick, when in the Eye of Men, ought to look upon himſelf as a *Dieſſembler* in it; eſpecially if *Gain* be his *Godlineſs*, and Religion only made uſe of as a Hook to draw it to him.

Secondly, Let the employing our Zeal about the *Circumſtantials* of Religion only, be carefully avoided, (whe-

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For can any Man be ſo weak as to believe, that the obſerving or not obſerving ſuch and ſuch *Modes* of Worſhip, can cleanſe the Soul, and make it like to God, and fit for Heaven? They ſerve indeed for Decency and Order, when uſed with Judgment and Moderation; and ought not to be ſlighted and neglected, when enjoyn'd by Lawful Authority; but 'tis thoſe Duties that will *renew us in the Spirit of our Mind*, and work our Souls into a Divine Frame and Temper, which ſhould be a Chriſtian's chief Care to practiſe in Sincerity of Heart.

Was it not Groſs Hypocriſie in the Phariſees, to be more careful and diligent in *Tithing Mint and Cummin, and Anniſe*; in their Waſhings and Faſtings, and Attendance at the Publick Offices in the Temple, and the like; than in performing the *weighteſt matters of the Law*,

Law, Juſtice, Mercy, and Fidelity; nay, indeed to Act quite contrary to them?

Would not the cleanſing themſelves from Extortion and Exceſs have been a much more becoming Employment for them, than to be always taken up with waſhing their Hands and their Garments, and *Scouring the Cup and the Platter? Theſe things ought ye to have done*, ſays our Lord, *and not to have left the other undone.*

Let us beware therefore of Depending too much upon our being of this or that *Party*, for or againſt ſuch and ſuch Ceremonies, going ſo often to Prayers, hearing ſo many Sermons, and the like: For 'tis not this that will ſtand us in any ſtead, unleſs we follow the Example of the Holy Jeſus, walk as he walk'd, and adorn our Souls with the Graces of his moſt excellent Religion. And if we ſtill are Envious and Malicious, Furious and Revengeful, Intemperate and Unchaſte, Unjuſt and Uncharitable, and the like; and find our ſelves very little careful to

mortify these vile Affections, spending our Zeal and Warmth upon things of infinitely less Consequence; it must be concluded, that we are not yet Christians in Sincerity. Our best Performances at this rate are but as a Sacrifice without a Heart, which was always esteem'd as one of the worst of *Omens*, and an Argnment of God's great Displeasure.

Thirdly, 'Tis a very Ill sign when People *pick* and *choose* the Instances of their Obedience to the Christian Law; and make a great Shew of, and Stir about, some Particular Duties which are agreeable to their Natural Temper, and which they have no *Temptation*, or it may be *Ability*, to Transgress; and all the while Indulge themselves in the Sins they Love and Delight in, tho' never so expressly forbidden in the Gospel.

As if, for Instance; Because a Man's Constitution inclines him to be Temperate and Chaste, he should therefore place the greatest Part of his Religion in

in Chaſtity and Temperance, and in the mean time allow himſelf to be Cenſorious, Malicious, Covetous, Unjuſt, or the like; or, on the Contrary, becauſe he is honeſt and good natur'd, tho' he Whores and Drinks, and lives like a Brute, yet ſhall imagine he may fare well enough, becauſe he has no *Gall* in him, wiſhes no body any Harm, and is no ones Enemy but his own. But this is a Religion of every Man's own making, not that which our Saviour taught the World; 'tis as various as Mens Tempers, and at this rate, every Man will change his Religion, according to the Alterations of his *Conſtitution*. Or rather, He will change the Inſtances of his *Impiety*; for True Religion is always the ſame.

Nay, not only ſuch and ſuch a Conſtitution, but a vigorous Health, and a full Fortune, are neceſſary to the Commiſſion of ſome Vices; and he, who in a Conſumption of his Body or Eſtate, may paſs for a Man of a very good Life; may yet, when Health and Plenty

of God. *He* is the great First Mover, and *this* his Powerful Instrument.

So that the Devout Person is truly πεπαρμένος εἰς ζωὴν, rightly prepared and dispos'd to Eternal Life, and has the Seed of God abiding in him; that blessed Principle of Spiritual Growth and Improvement, which will in due time exert it self, till he comes *to the measure of the Stature of the fulness of Christ, and is throughly furnish'd and instructed to every Good Work.*

Nothing therefore is of greater Consequence to *all* People, but more especially to those who are *beginning* their Christian Course, than by forming in their Minds true Apprehensions of God and Religion, and a frequent Retreat from the World, spent in Meditation and Prayer, and Conversation with Books of Piety and Practical Religion; to preserve and encrease such a truly *Devotional* Temper of Mind, as will make 'em pursue with Life and Spirit the great Business of their Salvation.

The

The Fifth Advice.

BUT, leſt Warmth of Temper *alone* ſhould be taken for Piety and Devotion, (as it too often is) and Religion, by this means, degenerate into *Hypocriſie*, and outward Shew, and become Wordly and Deſigning, or at beſt humourſome and uncertain; 'tis highly needful to adviſe Young Perſons, carefully to take heed of *Inſincerity*: That their Affection to Religion be True and Hearty, fix'd and deep Rooted in their very *Souls*, and not made up of ſudden Flaſhes of Paſſion, and a few Fits of natural Enthuſiaſm, which are often made uſe of to the worſt of Purpoſes.

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As if, for Inſtance; Becauſe a Man's Conſtitution inclines him to be Temperate and Chaſte, he ſhould therefore place the greateſt Part of his Religion in

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ty comes, be quite another ſort of a Creature.

But now, True Religon, is *an Uniform State of compleat Virtue*; that is, is always the ſame in *Kind*, tho' not in *Degree*. The ſincere Chriſtian, whatever he may do by Surprize or Inadvertency, will not at any time, or in any Circumſtances, *allow* himſelf in the Commiſſion of any known Sinful Action, or the Neglect of any known Duty, let his Conſtitution or his Fortune be what it will. But is heartily griev'd, not only for his *Sins*, but for his *Infirmities* too, and in good earneſt endeavours, in every thing, to preſerve *a Conſcience void of offence both towards God and Man.* Tho' nevertheleſs, the *Degrees* of his Virtue may and will vary, that is, be ſometimes more Intenſe, and ſometimes more Remiſs, than uſual, as long as he continues in this ſtate of Imperfection.

Let every Man therefore have a care of a *Partial*, *Humourſome* Religion; which

which will prove, in the Concluſion, to be very little better than none at all.

And now, having Caution'd Young People againſt a Feign'd *Hypocritical* Religion, and ſhewn 'em by what Marks it may be known; let me deſire 'em to conſider the Ill Conſequences of it.

And Firſt, as to this World. Whatever Advantages a Pretended Religioniſt may *Propoſe* to himſelf, he, for the moſt, *Fails* of them, and is at length Detected, and found to be what he is. After all the Pains he takes to act his Part dextrouſly, and make his Diſguiſe ſit natural and eaſy; after all, his Fears of being out, aud letting his Viſour fall, and the continual Reſtraint he's fain to put upon his Natural Temper, denying himſelf many things, which otherwiſe he would and might enjoy: After all this, which is really more Trouble than he need be at to be a Chriſtian indeed, ſome unlucky Accident or other uſually lays open all. *Unlucky*, did I ſay, rather the contrary,

Proſpe-

Proſperous, Hipocriſie being the greateſt Curſe that God can Inflict, as confirming the Wretch in it, and ſo ſealing him up to Deſtruction.

Ill Practices can't long be ſo conceal'd, but thatſome body or other will find 'em out; and bad Practices, and ſanctify'd Pretences agree ſo very Ill, that more Notice than ordinary will be taken of ſo *great* a Diſcord; and People have a ſtrange Itch of telling to one, and then to another, the little *Miſcarrriages*, much more the *Crimes*, of ſuch as have the Repute of better Men than their Neighbours.

To be cheated, and it may be *ruin'd*, by one whom we took for a *Saint*, is extremely ſurprizing; and will raiſe Mens Indignation to an extraordinary heigth, and make their Complaints loud and clamorous, and ſo the thing flies and ſpreads, and the Man is diſcover'd to be a Wolf in Sheeps Cloathing; and then there's an end of his *Gaining* by his Hypocriſie; for none but a Fool will have to do with a *known* Cheat, eſpecially

cially a *Religious* one. So that Men are often *ruin'd*, rather than advanc'd by ſuch Mock-Religion; and the Praiſe, that for a little while attended their fair Shews, becomes chang'd into laſting Infamy and Contempt.

But ſuppoſe the Cheat is carry'd on ſo artificially, that 'tis not diſcover'd by Men, and as to this World the counterfeit Chriſtian has his End: The poor Wretches Condition, as was hinted but now, is then but ſo much the worſe, and really next to deſperate, with reſpect to the *Eternal* World which follows this. For indeed, *Sincerity* is all in all; 'tis that, when all's done, that muſt recommend us to the Divine Acceptance; for what is there elſe on *our* Part that can do it?

How imperfect is the Religion of both Tables, and that even of the beſt and moſt truly good Chriſtian upon Earth! How full of *Ill* Ingredients too, thro' the Curruption of ſinful Nature, and the Temptations of the Devil! How guilty are we all of *Sins* innumerable

rable, in all our Relations; and thoſe not of Surprize only and Infirmity, but too often with the Conſent of our Wills, and that againſt the Diſſwaſives of our Reaſon and our Conſcience! For this, in Vertue of Chriſt's Blood, *Repentance* is the only *Remedy*. But then, how imperfect even at the beſt is *that!* So that unleſs the *Sincerity* of our Religion might be accepted inſtead of the *Perfection* of it, what would become even of the beſt Man living!

What have they to truſt to then, that have no Sincerity; who in their Intercourſe with God and Man are all over a Trick and a Lye? Do they think that *God* can't ſee through their Diſguiſe, becauſe, perhaps, *Man* could not; and that they ſhall paſs undiſcover'd into Heaven, becauſe they have the outward *Appearance* of a Chriſtian? But 'tis the *Heart* that God regards, the Inmoſt Secrets of which lie always naked and open to his All-ſeeing Eye; and to whom the faireſt Pretences imaginable will ſignify nothing, without

out *Truth in the Inward Parts*, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it. Pſal. 51. 6.

For *other* Failures, merciful Allowances, no queſtion, will be made, by him who knows and pities our Infirmities; but no Excuſe for the want of *Sincerity*: *That* is *Abſolutely* requir'd of every one of us, as being perfectly in our own Power, and without which every other Act of Religion is turn'd into a Provocation.

And if this be true, Lord, *What is the Hope of the Hypocrite?* as *Job* ſays. *His Truſt is as a Spiders webb, and his Confidence*, if he have any, ſhall but *bring him to the King of Terrors*. For whereon ſhould he ground his Hopes? On the Merits of our Saviour? But he is no more a Saviour? But he is no more a Saviour to the Hypocrite, than the Hypocrite is a Diſciple and Servant of his: He was a *Chriſtian* in Name, and no more, and Jeſus will be his *Saviour* in name, and no more. And this was his conſtant Language, while upon Earth, *Wo unto you Hypocrites, and why* Job 27. 8.

call

call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I ſay?

And if he can't ground his Hopes upon the Merits of our Saviour, where can he ground 'em elſe?

How neceſſary therefore is it for every Man, as he hopes to be ſav'd, not to reſt in the bare *Shew* and Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, nor vilely make Religion an Inſtrument of vain Glory, or a Cloak for Wickedneſs; but reſolve to be in his Heart, and in the Sight of God, what he appears to be to Men. That he who knowth all things, may know that he *ſincerely* Loves him; and *truly* endeavours, tho' with great Mixture of Imperfection, to obey and ſerve him.

The

The Sixth Advice.

HAving thus endeavour'd to ſecure a *warm* and a *ſincere* Senſe of Religion in young Perſons, which, where it is, muſt needs bring Happineſs along with it, it will not be amiſs to ſubjoin ſome Cautions againſt a few of thoſe Failings and Miſcarriages which they are moſt liable to, and which have a very unhappy Influence upon the whole Courſe of their Lives. Advice 6.

And firſt, Let 'em have a care of *Raſhneſs*, and overhaſty chooſing or acting in any Inſtance of Moment whatſoever. That there is very much of this in the World, eſpecially among young People, is paſt a Queſtion; and duly to *Deliberate*, tho' in things of *Conſequence*, is look'd upon, and that juſtly, in ſuch whoſe youthful Heat

is not yet cool'd by Age, as an Argument of a Perſon of extraordinary Hopes: This Prudent Caution, and Sedateneſs of Temper, and *wary* Management of Affairs, being, for the moſt part, the peculiar Glory of the Hoary Headed. And even *Theſe* muſt and do confeſs, That they too often obſerve ſome Remains of Juvenile Headineſs in their Reſolutions and Choices, and that more Coolneſs of Thought, and cloſer Conſideration would have done much better.

What a Malevolent Influence ſuch Inconſiderate Raſhneſs has upon a Man's Happineſs, common Obſervation will inform us; and I believe I may ſay, there is no Man living, that has not *himſelf* ſmarted for it, as well as obſerv'd Multitudes of others to do ſo; and very probably does ſtill, and always ſhall feel the Ill Conſequences of being led by a Headſtrong *Impetus* of Paſſion, Reſolving and Acting on the ſudden without Due Thought and Deliberation.

And

And indeed, how can it be otherwiſe? How can Men expect things ſhould ſucceed well that are done in a *Heat*, not examin'd half through, and ſo muſt needs have much more of the *Venture* in 'em, than any reaſonable Security of the Event?

'Tis true, there is ſomething of the Venture in every thing relating to this World, and the moſt cautious wary Men may find themſelves miſtaken; but then, this makes it ſtill leſs a Wonder, that thoſe ſhould ſucceed amiſs, who ſcarce Deliberate at all: And what is done at *random*, 'tis by meer chance if it hits *well*.

He that *Conſiders* well before he Acts, has time to look upon things from one end to the other, to turn and examine 'em on every ſide, and weigh and compare 'em together, and ſo in all probability, will make a much better Choice, than he that chops upon what comes next, and gives it but a careleſs paſſing Glance, and knows not its Ill Qualities till he comes to uſe it; and

ſmarts for his Folly in making ſo haſty a Bargain, when 'tis gone too far to be recall'd.

But ſhould a wary Man, after all, take *wrong* Meaſures, and be *overſeen*, ſtill he has this Comfort, That he did his beſt to prevent his being ſo; and may, by that very Overſight well obſerv'd and improv'd, be the leſs liable to be Impos'd on for the future. Whereas, when a Man reflects that his Ill Choice was wholly owing to his *Raſhneſs*; that if he had deliberated a while, he might have done much better, and ſav'd himſelf thoſe Troubles, and Vexations, and Entanglements, which now he muſt e'en ſubmit to, and rub through as well as he can: This is a *Cutting* Thought, that will Exaſperate the Mind to great degrees of Anguiſh, beyond the Power of ordinary Applications to alleviate.

Now when all this may be prevented, and a Man's Mind kept at Eaſe, and his Affairs manag'd happily, at the light expence and little trouble of a few

few cool Thoughts; who would not immediately begin the Experiment?

When a Man firſt begins to be his *Own Governour*, every ones Eye is upon him; ſome with Ill deſign, others with Good; ſome to make a Prey of him, others to expoſe and laugh at him; and ſome few others out of a kind and generous Intention to ſet him right when he proceeds amiſs. So that every thing that is Dear to a Man, his Fortune and his Reputation, his Quiet and his Innocence, *all's* very much concern'd in his prudent Management of his Affairs at *firſt*. More than ordinary Care therefore is needful to be taken, and more than ordinary Circumſpection, when we walk amongſt Precipices, and are in frequent danger of dropping into Ruine. 'Tis not our being *arriv'd to the Years of Diſcretion*, but making Due *Uſe* of that Diſcretion, which beſpeaks us *Men*; and this can't be done without more than a little Thought and Proceeding leiſurely, and making uſe of an experienc'd Faithful *Guide* too, in ways of Difficulty and Danger. And

no Man's Circumſtances can look more promiſing than *his*, who calmly makes uſe of his *own* Underſtanding as far as it will direct him, and then conſults wiſer Heads than his own, before he engages in any thing of Moment.

The

The Seventh Advice.

BUT Secondly, Let all young Perſons beware of *Pride* and *Ambition.* Advice 7.

As to the *firſt*, let 'em conſider, That whatever makes Men *Proud*, is originally the Bleſſing of Heaven, beſtow'd upon them not for their own Advantage only, but for that of every one elſe within the Circle of their Converſation. Greatneſs of *Quality* ſuppoſe, to protect and encourage Virtue; Greatneſs of *Eſtate* to miniſter to others Wants; the Endowments of the *Mind*, to qualify for good Government, and the Inſtruction of the Ignorant in all uſeful Knowledge; and *Beauty*, to render us the more acceptable, and engage our Affections the more firmly to

one another, by ſo *Senſible* an Argument.

Now from this Obſervation, we may diſcover both the *Vileneſs* and *Folly* of this great Sin of Pride.

For to begin with *Beauty*: What can be a greater *Abuſe* of this good Gift of God, and *ſilly* likewiſe to the laſt degree, than to be ſo over-opinionated of it, as to carry our ſelves high, and ſtately, and ſlightingly to others; and thereby turn ſo engaging a Motive of Mens *Love*, into an Occaſion of their Hatred and *Averſion*?

And ſo, to be Imperious and Aſſuming, upon account of *Birth*, *Quality*, or *Eſtate*; to deſpiſe and trample upon Inferiours, and make uſe of Power and Wealth only to exalt our ſelves, and depreſs every body elſe: This is not only to run quite counter to the gracious Deſign of our great Benefactor, but is the ready way to make our ſelves the *Calamity* of Mankind, by the Ill uſe of that very Bounty of Heaven, which

which, if manag'd as it ſhould be, would render us the Bleſſed Inſtruments of making all about us *Happy*.

And ſo for *Wit* and *Parts*; to make the Advancement of ones own Reputation the cheif Aim, and to pride ones ſelf in that, and deſpiſe and *expoſe* others, inſtead of inſtructing and *informing* 'em; much more, to corrupt their Minds, by inſtilling *falſe* Principles and Notions into 'em, to carry on the Intrigues of a Party, and raiſe a Name to our ſelves at the Price of others Ruine: This is Helliſh indeed, the moſt impious Abuſe of ſuch noble Gifts, and very like the Deſtructive Pride of *Lucifer* himſelf. And 'tis the greateſt *Folly* too, it being the moſt effectual way utterly to *deſtroy* that Reputation which we deſign to *raiſe*.

Beſides, great *Diſquiet* and Diſcontent muſt needs fill the Breaſt of him, who is ſo exalted in his own Imagination, and yet finds, or at leaſt *thinks* he finds, ſo little proportionable regard from every body elſe. And very likely it may be

ſo

ſo indeed; for the more a Man Idolizes himſelf, the leſs will he be reſpected by others, and really deſerves to be ſo. And if he is ſo full of Reſentment, as to *diſcover* it, and the Pride of his Heart together; this makes him ſtill more deſpis'd, and that vexes and enrages him ſtill more, till ſomething very Fatal is too often in the Concluſion.

If the Proud Man is great and powerful; then Oppreſſion, and Tyranny, and Revenge, with all its dire Attendants: If in a meaner Condition, then Envy and Hate, undermining and blaſting others, and all the ſad effects of an exaſperated Spirit. And if any ſmart Affliction befalls him; inſtead of Patience, Reſignation and Repentance, nothing but Rage, and Fury, and wild Diſtraction, ready to *Curſe God and dye.*

So highly needful is it for every Man to beware of *Pride*; eſpecially thoſe whoſe Age and Circumſtances render 'em moſt in Danger of it, thro' a full

a full Poſſeſſion of what is moſt apt to excite it.

Not but that a young Perſon may pleaſe himſelf in reflecting upon any of his Excellencies and Endowments; for who can chooſe but be delighted in the Poſſeſſion of what is good and deſirable? But then, *God* muſt have all the *Glory*, (for of our ſelves we are, and have *nothing*) and our Brethren all due *benefit* and *advantage*. We muſt not be the leſs, but rather the *more* affable and condeſcending; and deſpiſe and undervalue no Body. And in ſhort, no other Affections muſt be ſuffer'd to ariſe in our own Souls by any thing that makes us thus differ from other Men, than Love and Thankfulneſs to our Divine Benefactor, and great Deſires, and frequent Reſolutions and *Contrivances*, of doing more and more good in our Generation.

Let a Man be thus diſpos'd, and thus employ'd, and he need not fear the guilt of *Pride*; tho' at the ſame time he

he be very ſenſible, that *he is not as other Men are.*

As for *Ambition*, or eager Aſpiring after *Greatneſs*; we may conſider, that nothing is more common, than for Men, either to ſink in the Purſuit of it, or to be undone by its Attainment.

And indeed, nothing has fill'd Hiſtory with more Tragic Relations, than the Fate of *Ambitious* Men; whoſe very Methods too, of *raiſing* themſelves, have prov'd at length their *Ruine.*

Very often Men Graſp at that, which they can't tell what to do with when they have it: For every one that has Vanity enough to think fine things of himſelf, and buſtles mightily for an Employment equal to his fancied Merit, is not therefore really *cut out* for ſuch Employment. Some make a very Indifferent Figure in *high* Stations, who look'd well enough when more within their Element; and then, their Awkward Management, and it may be *Inſufficiency*, expoſes 'em to ſo much Shame

Shame and Contempt, and the Uneaſineſs conſequent upon it, as muſt needs deſtroy their Happineſs.

But make the *beſt* of the matter, and ſuppoſe *Merit*, and *Ambition*, and *Succeſs* to go together; yet ſtill there are thoſe, whoſe Minds are as *Aſpiring* to the full, and their *Senſe* as great, and their *Envy* very quick-ſighted, prying and inquiſitive, reſtleſs and contriveing, ready to catch at and *improve* every little trip and miſcarriage: So that indeed, unleſs there be an equal degree of *Cunning* mix'd with Ambition, the Man need only be left to himſelf, *to do his own Buſineſs.*

And whenever he begins to *decline*, either in his Fortune or his Reputation, and comes within their reach, they'll not fail to lend him their hands to bring him ſtill *lower*, till they have him quite *down*, and by trampling upon him, raiſe themſelves into his Seat.

In ſhort, all *Hights* are unſafe and uneaſy, and few Mens Heads are ſtrong enough

enough to bear 'em long; and how miſerable a Fall is from 'em, I need not ſay: And therefore to be ſo *hot* in ſcrambling up to 'em, as 'tis ſeldom *innocent*, ſo is never *wiſe*. And when All's done, that's the moſt Laſting and beſt Reliſh'd Promotion of any kind whatever, which is leaſt of a Man's own ſeeking, and comes on by eaſy, quiet ſteps. For it has none of thoſe *Worms* at the bottom, which are generally found under Advancements of too *haſty* Growth; and which never fail to eat out their Heart, and ſoon reduce 'em to nothing.

If *God's Providence* deſigns a Man for an Eminent Station, he knows which way to *raiſe* him to it, and will *capacitate* him for it, and ſet him *faſt* in it; and we may have obſerv'd, that thoſe have been the greateſt Bleſſings both to the Church and State, whoſe Preferments have *ſtolen* upon 'em with leaſt Noiſe and Flutter.

'Tis true, Men ought to have their Eyes open to *ſee* the Hand of Providence

dence in ſuch caſes, and humbly and thankfully to be *directed* by it, in making due uſe of thoſe Opportunities that are put into their Power to Improve. And 'tis as true, that what a Man may lawfully and honourable *receive*, he may innocently *ask* for; and to be Above making *any* Applications towards the bettering ones Circumſtances, when there is juſt occaſion for it, is a Spice of that *Haughtineſs* of Temper we but now condemn'd. But to be eager and reſtleſs, and always upon the *Hunt* in things of this nature, no Man can juſtify. And thoſe Alterations in a Man's Condition, tho' ſeemingly for the *better*, which look like the Effect of his own *Buſtling* and *Importunity*, rather than the Deſignation of *Providence* (which carries ſufficient Marks along with it whereby it may be known;) ſeldom prove well in the *Concluſion*, as being, too often, not right in the *Principle*; at leaſt, they are not ſo *thoroughly* happy, as thoſe in which *Providence* is more remarkable than

any

any thing beſides; and which are therefore quite throughout *Innocent.*

A ſteady Belief of *God's* diſpoſing all things with Infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs; and a full Perſwaſion, that what Additions of Worldly Good, in any Inſtance whatever, are *fit* for us to have, we ſhall in due time have 'em; together with an Innocent Diligence in the Station we are in at preſent.: This is the true Temper of a *Chriſtian*; and that alone which can render Worldly Greatneſs *Safe* and *Eaſy.*

Thus may we be *advanc'd* without *Ambition*; and in the midſt of growing Honours, preſerve that Calmneſs and Indifferency of Soul, which will inſure to us *Happineſs*, let things go how they will: Whereas, on the contrary, a Mind High and *Aſpiring* will make it impoſſible for us to Taſte it even in the moſt *Flouriſhing* Condition, and render the Straits and Neglects of *Low* Circumſtances utterly intolerable.

Now

Now who would not Infinitely value that Temper of Mind, and earneſtly endeavour after it, eſpecially in ſo fickle a World as this; which will make him happy in *any* Condition, teach him *how to abound and how to ſuffer want, and in every ſtate therewith to be content?* Phil. 4. 11, 12.

The Eighth Advice.

Advice 8. IN the next Place, Young Perſons would be adviſ'd to preſerve their Minds free from *unclean Thoughts*, and a too quick Reſentment of things as *Injuries* and *Affronts*.

How very inclinable to *both* theſe, young People are, is too well known; and therefore, their Care and *Watchfulneſs* ought to be equal to the *Danger*. They both proceed from that *Warmth* and *Spirit* which is in vigorous Youth, and are conſequently the harder to be avoided, having *Nature* ſo much of their ſide, which will make it neceſſary to uſe the more Diligence, and begin betimes, that *better* Affections may have the *firſt Poſſeſſion*, and *Nature* become mended by *Religion*.

As

As for the *firſt* of theſe, the keeping the Mind *chaſte* and pure from the Defilement of *unclean Thoughts*; beſides that, 'tis the greateſt Security againſt *Speaking* Filthily, (the moſt *unbecoming* thing in Nature to a *young* Mouth, eſpecially that of a Gentleman) and *Acting* ſo too; for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh, and from the heart proceed adulteries and fornications:* Beſides this, unclean Deſires, ſhould they proceed no *further*, muſt needs be an unſpeakeable Plague and Diſquiet to the Soul.

This Impure Paſſion is expreſs'd in Scripture, and in our common way of ſpeaking, by *Burning*; becauſe of the *uncontroulableneſs* of it when ſuffer'd to get Head, and Impatience of Reſiſtance. And therefore, whoever Indulges to Thoughts of Uncleaneſs, ſets his Soul on a *Flame*; and muſt either ſuffer himſelf to be *conſum'd* in the Fire, and fall a ſhameful Victim to his *Luſts*; or elſe with great Diſquietude *reſiſt* 'em, and ſtrive againſt an almoſt Remedileſs Evil, which often grows the ſtron-

ger for being oppos'd, and rages the more for want of being ſatisfy'd. And ſo, beſides the guilt of entertaining thoſe Impure Deſires at firſt, the wretched Creature has brought himſelf to this uncomfortable *Streight*, either to *yeild* to 'em, and ſuffer himſelf to be carry'd on whither the Torrent drives, which he can't but know, will upon all Accounts, bring him to certain Ruine; or elſe muſt ſpend his time in the moſt uneaſy Employment, of checking Impatiently ſtrong Deſires. But now, he that has begun to Purify his Soul *betimes*, and nipp'd *unchaſte* Thoughts in their very firſt *riſe*, and planted *Pious* Meditations in their Room, and is warm'd with the Fires of an Affectionate Religion; beſides the Quiet and Serenity that attends Innocence, and a Converſation with the moſt full and ſatisfying Objects, there is this over and above, that in this Caſe there is no need of curbing and *reſtraining* our Deſires: Devotion and *Heavenly Love* can never burn too bright, nor flame too high; the more vigorous they grow, the Soul is ſtill the Happier; and Happieſt of all is ſhe, when quite

overcome

overcome with the Divine Flame, and made a *whole Burnt-offering* to God. And as for the too quick Reſentment of things as *Affronts* and *Injuries*; he that is of this Temper, and indulges himſelf in it, muſt bid *Adieu* to all Repoſe and Quiet. It cannot reaſonably be Expected, that every one we converſe with ſhould think as we think, and Act as we Act, and make *our* Intereſt *theirs*, and jump with us exactly in Diſpoſition and Humour; and in all things obſerve the Rules of Decency and good Breeding towards us. Innumerable things, do what we can, will fall out croſs and untowardly; and the moſt *Inoffenſive* Perſons, partly thro' Miſtake, partly thro' Imprudence, and want of Conſideration, may make ſuch Trips, as if Men are reſolv'd to catch at every thing, may be conſtrued in an ill Senſe, and made the Occaſion of a Falling out.

But then, the Queſtion is, Whether 'tis not better, either by taking things by the beſt handle, and putting a *favourable* Interpretation upon 'em, or elſe quite *overlooking* and paſſing them

by, to live in *Peace* and Quietneſs; than by every ſuch Accident to be blown up into *Paſſion* and *Fury*, and great Indecencies, and it may be ſo far tranſported as to commit what we ſhall have Reaſon to repent of as long as we Live? For no Man can ſay before hand, how *far* his Paſſion ſhall pro-
Prov. 17. 14 ceed. *The beginnings of ſtrife*, as *Solomon* ſays, *being like the letting out of Water*, very difficult to be ſtop'd again; and from a ſmall *Rill* at firſt, growing into an *Inundation* that bears down all before it.

It can't be deny'd indeed, but that ſometimes there will be *Juſt* Occaſion for *Reſentment*; and when there is ſo, neither Reaſon nor Religion does forbid it. But even then, ſome *bounds* muſt be ſet to it; as *Prudence* would tell us, if there were no ſuch thing as *Chriſtianity*. For really, a Man can't give his Adverſary a greater advantage over him, than to *heat* himſelf out of the uſe of his Reaſon; he thereby laying himſelf quite *open* to him, and perfectly betraying himſelf into his power.

And

And I'd fain know whether 'tis not much better, even in Caſe of a *conſiderable* Injury, to endeavour to right ones ſelf calmly and quietly, in the Methods that Cool Reaſon and Good Laws direct; than by following blind *Paſſion*, and I can't tell what Miſtaken Notions of *Honour*, to be far more Injurious to our *ſelves* than ever the greateſt *Enemy* was, that we had yet to deal with?

What is this but to Puniſh our ſelves for other Mens Faults? To make our Lives extreamly troubleſome and uneaſy, becauſe ſuch a one is proud and haughty, another ſilly and impertinent, a third behaves himſelf rudely and like an Ill-bred Clown, and a fourth it may be has made too bold with our Reputation, and ſaid things of us which he cannot Juſtify? And therefore, with great Reaſon, did *Solomon* ſay, *The diſcretion of a Man deferreth his Anger, and it is his Glory to paſs over a Tranſgreſſion.* And in another place, *He that is ſlow to Anger is of great* Prov.19.11 Prov.14.29

Underſtanding, but he that is haſty of Spirit exalteth Folly. Which wiſe Obſervations I ſhall leave to young Perſons ſerious Conſideration; and proceed to

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The

The Ninth Advice.

ANother piece of Advice which I think very needful to be given and obſerv'd, and that is relating to the common way of *Converſation* now in uſe; that they would have a care of Conforming too much to *that*; which, for the moſt part, is made up of *Vanity* and *Cenſure*, and a treacherous collecting ſuch *Remarks* and Obſervations in one Viſit, as may be matter for Invidious *Reflections* the next. And this is now become an *Art*, and ſet *Rules* there are of Learning and Practiſing it; and a great Reflection it is upon a Man not nicely to obſerve 'em, eſpecially if he tranſgreſſes on the *good Natur'd* ſide. And to encourage Peoples Proficiency, thoſe that are moſt ready at it, and carry it moſt ſmooth- Advice 9.

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ly on, and with the leaſt ſuſpicion, and make moſt uſe of it upon Occaſion, are eſteem'd as Perſons of the beſt Breeding and beſt Senſe, and their Company *Courted*, as the moſt agreeable and diverting.

This is that which we call *Glozing* and *Complement*, Expreſſions of Kindneſs and Eſteem, without *Sincerity* at the bottom; when Mens fair ſmooth Behaviour, ſet Flouriſhes, great Civilities, *&c.* is nothing but *Diſſimulation*; and they are really upon the *ſpy* all the while, that they may diſcover ſomething in each others Diſcourſe or Behaviour, whereby they may *Expoſe* one another when there is opportunity. And this, as a choice Treaſure, they lay up ſafely in their Memories, and bring it out to the next Company they are in, and ſhew it with all the Advantages that may be, Comment and Inlarge upon it, and recommend it as the Subject of every ones niceſt and moſt critical Remarks, and ſo 'tis handed round. Which ſeems to be moſt exactly deſcrib'd by the Pſalmiſt,

Pſal.

Pſal. 41.6. *And if he come to ſee me, he ſpeaketh Vanity, his Heart gathereth Iniquity to it ſelf, and when he goeth abroad he telleth it.* So that after all, 'tis an *Old Faſhion'd* Vice, tho' probably the World has refin'd upon't, and improv'd it, by long Uſe and *Practice*; *Wickedneſs*, as well as other things, being perfected by time.

Now that this is really the preſent *Modiſh* way of Converſation, every one that knows what Converſation is, muſt needs be ſenſible. What a World of ſeeming *Endearment* do we meet with every where? So many Fine Expreſſions of Mens extraordinary Value, Kindneſs and Reſpect, ſuch frequent Aſſurances of ready Service and Aſſiſtance, and the like; that did thoſe *deſerve* all this to whom it is given, and thoſe that give it ſincerely *mean* as they ſpeak, we ſhould have a Heaven upon Earth. Such great Deſert and Excellency on the one hand, and ſo much Benignity and Rejoycing in each others Good, on the other, would make the World

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a Family of Love, and again give Occaſion to the Wonder and Envy of the Enemies of our Faith, when they ſhould ſee the *Chriſtians ſo entirely love one another.* But what is at the *Bottom* of all this? Why truly, for the moſt part, either *nothing*, or what is very much *worſe.* 'Tis either a *ſet* way of Converſation, made uſe of Indifferently to every body, to ſhew the Man's *Breeding*, more than his *Friendſhip*; and tho' there is no *Sincerity*, there's yet as little *Malice* in it; or elſe 'tis deſign'd as a *Snare*, to trepan People into ſuch Diſcourſes or Behaviour, as may give Occaſion for the expoſing and ridiculing of them afterwards. And 'tis no new thing, for a Man to have as *Ill* a Character in good *earneſt* given of him, and by the ſame Perſon, *behind his back*; as he had a Fair one, in *Complement*, before his *Face.* Nay, thoſe *very* things which were then ſpoken *well* of, and it may be *deſerv'd* it, ſhall have quite another *Gloſs* ſet upon 'em, in the next Company where it may be Acceptable.

What

What more uſual than for People to be upon the *Pump* in their Viſits? Making uſe of little ſly Arts and Fetches, to diſcover one anothers Thoughts of this or that Perſon, ſuch and ſuch an Action or Occurrence, how they are inclin'd in ſuch an Affair, and the like; and all this on purpoſe to make 'em the Subject of the next Diſcourſe, to diſplay their want of Wit, or Breeding, to call in queſtion their Prudence, or their Principles, and not ſeldom to make a breach between Family and Family, Friend and Friend, whoſe good Correſpondence, and right Underſtanding, they before envy'd, and would fain deſtroy.

And how *happy* do ſome account themſelves, in Plenty of ſuch kind of Obſervations! which, to be ſure, ſhall loſe nothing in their Communicating 'em to others, nor fail of their End for want of any Additions that are neceſſary. Their Company, they think, can't but be very diverting, which will make Men ſo knowing in other Folks Matters, and furniſh Ill Nature with

with ſo many choice Topicks for Cenſure, and Occaſion ſo much of a *Laugh*. And if a loud *Whiſper* will recommend any thing of this Nature, and make it fly further in the Diſguiſe of a *Secret*; then it ſhall be diſclos'd with ſeeming *Caution* as a great *Truſt*, an Argument of the *Confidence* they have in you; when all the while they're upon the watch what *your* Sentiments will be of the matter, and as officiouſly carry them back to the Party concern'd, as they brought their Treacherous Remarks of *him* to *you*. And thus is the Fire of Contention kindled, and that too often, beyond all poſſibility of Exſtinction.

That this is no *Feign'd* Deſcription of modern Converſation, I may Appeal to any Man's own *Obſervation*, and to very many's *Practice*. But now, one would wonder, what ſhould Incline People to it. Whether Pride and Envy, which prompts Men to ſink every Bodies Reputation but their own; whether Malice and Revenge, which takes this ſecret undiſcover'd way to return

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an Injury; or that Helliſh Temper of doing Miſchief for Miſchiefs ſake, and making ſport with ſetting People together by the Ears, and expoſing and deriding one another: Whether all, or any thing of this Nature, or whatever elſe it is that puts Men upon it; this is certain, that nothing can be ſaid in its Juſtification; and every one condemns it when *himſelf* is concern'd in it; nay, Men can't but have very ill Thoughts of ſuch as they know are of this vile Temper, altho' not touch'd by it *themſelves*, and tho' the News they bring of others too, may be Acceptable enough.

And indeed, there can be no worſe Ingredients of Society, than outward ſhews of Friendſhip and Endearment, where there is no *Sincerity*; eſpecially where the moſt Treacherous Obſervation of what may be to a Man's Prejudice is conceal'd under it, and that with an Intention of divulging it the next opportunity.

The

The end of Society, is mutual Comfort and Aſſiſtance; in order to which 'tis neceſſary, that Men heartily deſire each others Good, and endeavour to promote it to their Power; whether by Counſel and Advice, or by ſome Beneficial Actions, as occaſion ſhall require.

And to this, a Friendly imparting one anothers Circumſtances is needful, ſo far as Prudence will allow; and ſuch Expreſſions of Kindneſs to each other, as may induce ſome reaſonable Aſſurance, of all due and ſeaſonable Help. And this, every Man (being in ſome degree ſenſible of his own *Indigence* and Imperfection) does naturally *expect* from the Society of others; and it can't but be mighty pleaſing to him, to meet with ſuch, as by the kindneſs of their Expreſſions, and endearing Behaviour, give him great Reaſon to believe, that what Aſſiſtance they can give him, when he needs it, he ſhall have: And nothing is more becoming a Man and a Chriſtian, than ſuch a Courteous way of Converſation.

And

And that nothing might be wanting to compleat the Happineſs of the *Social* Life, God gave to Man the Faculty of Speech; whereby our Thoughts and Deſigns, what we *want*, and what we *deſire*, might *preſently*, and with *eaſe*, be made known to one another, and which muſt needs make our Intercourſe higly pleaſing, and of great Advantage. But then, there muſt be *Truth* and *Sincerity* in all this, or elſe All's ſpoil'd. For, an outward Shew of Friendſhip and Civilty, which is either nothing *but* ſhew, or, which is Infinitely worſe, a Cover for Treacherous and *Baſe Deſigns*, does indeed tend to the deſtruction of all Society, and makes Converſation either the moſt *uneaſy* thing in nature, or elſe a *Decoy* into the worſt of Misfortunes.

For Men muſt be ſuppos'd, either to believe the Civilities they receive from one another to be *Real* and *Hearty*, or the *contrary*. If they take them to be *Real* when they are *not* ſo; 'twill prove a very dangerous Miſtake, as we

ſhall ſee in the Sequel: And if they look upon 'em as *hollow* and *deſigning*, I need not ſay how *grating* and unwelcom they will be, and what uneaſineſs every Man muſt undergo, that's forc'd to be continually upon his *Guard*, as in the midſt of Spies, and treacherous Obſervers of what-ever may tend to his Prejudice.

What more odious to a Man, than that which he *knows* to be *Flattery*, and the Fawnings and forc'd Smiles of a Perfidious Enemy! To be fain to *weigh* every word before one dares to ſpeak it, by no means to venture to be free and *open*, for fear the Enemy ſhould take Advantage by it, but always upon the *Reſerve*, full of Care and Circumſpection, as in the midſt of Ambuſcades, and walking amongſt Boggs and Quagmires. This certainly muſt needs make Converſation the moſt troubleſome thing in the World. A Life led in a Deſart would be more eligible than ſuch Society as this; and the Prophet *Jeremy* very feelingly expreſſes his Reſentment of it, *Ch.* 9. *Verſe* 2. *&c. O that I had*

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in the Wilderneſs, ſays he, *a Lodging Place, that I might leave my People and go from them, for they are an Aſſembly of Treacherous Men; they bend their Tongue like their Bow for lyes. Take ye heed every one of his Neighbour* (or, as in the Original, his *Friend*) *and truſt not in any Brother; for every Brother will utterly ſupplant, and every Neighbour will walk with Slanders. They have,* (as 'twere artificially) *TAUGHT their Tongue to ſpeak lyes, thine Habitation is in the midſt of Deceit. One ſpeaketh peaceably to his Neighbour with his Mouth, but in his Heart he layeth his wait.*

And *David* thought, he need not wiſh worſe to his moſt Inveterate Enemies, than that their *Table*, their Freeeſt Converſation, and moſt Intimate Society, might *become to 'em a Snare and a Trap.* Pſal. 69. 22.

As for the *Baſeneſs*, and unhappy *Conſequences* of ſuch a Treacherous Manner of Behaviour; 'twill not be amiſs to conſider both a little.

With Reſpect to the Firſt, *Friendſhip* is ſo Sacred a thing, that to Diſſemble it for vile Purpoſes, and under its Cover to play the Devil with one another, is a moſt unpardonable Crime, and like *Judas*'s betraying our Saviour with a Kiſs. From Careſſes and Endearments, to proceed immediately to ſpiteful Reflections, Ill-natur'd Cenſures, and Poiſonous Malignant Whiſpers, ſuch as will blaſt my Reputation, and blacken my good Name, or at leaſt make me *Ridiculous*, and the Subject of Mens Sport and Laughter: For a Man to Dive to the bottom of my Soul, by ſly Inſinuating Arts, falſe Proteſts of Love, and deſire of my Happineſs, (which Methods are but too ſucceſful with thoſe that have more of the *Dove* than *Serpent* in them) and then expoſe me, when ever 'twill ingratiate himſelf to do ſo: This is extremely *baſe*, beyond expreſſion.

To ſpeak worſe of *any* Man behind his Back than we would dare to do before his Face, is certainly a very pittiful unmanly thing; and to wound an *Ab-*

Abſent Perſon's *Reputation*, is e'en as bad as to give his body an unexpected *Treacherous Stab.* In ſo nice a Caſe as a Man's *Credit*, every one ought to have all the *Fair* Play imaginable; that he may be able to defend himſelf, and not be inevitably expos'd to all the Dirt that every Malicious Pick-thank ſhall rake together and throw upon him. And in caſe of *Natural* Failings and Defects, which are more a Man's *Misfortune* than his *Fault*, to Blazon 'em about is barbarous and inhumane. But all this is ſtill much worſe, if we all the while hold *Fair* with the Perſon when we *ſee* him, and are as obliging and complaiſant to him as to any body elſe. The *Conſequences* of this deceitful Fawning Way, are very pernicious upon all Accounts.

Indeed, a too obſequious complemental way of Addreſs, tho' there be no *Ill Deſigns* at the bottom, is yet too often of unhappy Conſequence, eſpecially to young People. Firſt, becauſe 'tis ſo apt to blind Mens Eyes as to their *Failings* and *Imperfections*, and to create

and that inſenſibly, ſuch fond Fancies in their Heads, as end in intollerable Pride and Self-conceit. And therefore, 'tis accounted one of the greateſt Misfortunes of Perſons of great *Quality*, that they can ſeldom meet with thoſe that will tell them the *Truth*; but whatever their real *Deſerts* may be, they are always admir'd and extold, humour'd and comply'd with in every thing, their Vices guilded over with the Arts of Flattery, *great* things ſaid of what deſerves but *little*; and nothing, of what deſerves *Reproof*, unleſs it be to *hide* and *palliate* it; and ſo they are drill'd on in Ignorance of themſelves, 'till Death draws aſide the Curtain, and ſhews 'em what indeed they are, and too often opens a dreadful View of the then incorrigible Wickedneſs, which before they took but little notice of, or were taught to pride themſelves in, as Excellencies and *Accompliſhments*. This is, no doubt, a very Deplorable Condition, and many are ſo unhappy as to fall into it, thro' the Exceſſive *Civilities* (as they are call'd) of thoſe whom they Converſe with. But 'tis a

ſtrange

ſtrange ſort of *Civility* that betrays into ſuch Fatal Deceptions as theſe; and *Plain-dealing*, would Men conſider it, will prove to be the moſt Obliging thing in the World.

Again, this over-ſmoothneſs of Tongue and Carriage, is apt to make an undeſigning Good-natur'd Perſon take thoſe for his *Friends* who are *not* ſo; and who, though they mean him no *harm*, it may be when they careſs him ſo, yet intend him as little *good*. That is, they have no further Aim or Deſign, than to ſhew their *Good Breeding*; and when the Viſit and the *Complement* is over, the *Friendſhip* ends with it, and they are as they were before.

But now, ſuppoſe I ſhould be ſo Credulous, as to take all this for *Real Friendſhip*; and ſhould therefore acquaint the Man with my Circumſtances, which are ſuch perhaps, as none but a Friend indeed ſhould be Acquainted with, and deſire his Advice and Aſſiſtance: What a *Blank* would it be

to me to find *him* cool, and ſtrange, and glad to ſhift me off, who before was ſo full of *Endearment* and Proteſts of his readineſs to ſerve me, nay, as *Importunate*, it may be, for an Employment, as a poor Wretch that's ready to ſtarve for want of one?

How would it vex me to have unboſom'd my ſelf to a Fawning *Hypocrite*; and to lie at his Mercy for the *Concealment* of what would mightily prejudice me, if it ſhould be known: And inſtead of receiving any *Aſſiſtance* from him, be forc'd to acknowledge it as a great Favour, that he does not *expoſe* and *ruine* me; nay, find my ſelf oblig'd to *Buy* that Favour, perhaps at a very dear rate! In ſuch a Caſe (and ſuch Caſes there have been) what ſhould I think of that Glozing way of Behaviour which betray'd me into ſuch unhappy Circumſtances?

But ſuppoſe this Man of Complement ſhould prove my *Enemy* at laſt, and make an *Ill* Uſe of my Credulity, and *Lure* me on to further Confiden-

ces

ces and Intimacies, on purpoſe to get me more certainly into his Clutches; What a *Fatal* Miſtake ſhould I *then* be under! There is nothing certainly more miſchivous, nor more *unavoidably* ſo, than a *Counterfeit Friend*, who is really an *Enemy*; nor any thing therefore of worſe Conſequence, than that way of Converſation which is ſo apt to deceive People in this Matter, and incline them to take ſuch Serpents into their Boſoms.

Nor is it leſs deſtructive of *Neighbourhood* and *Society*. In Converſation, eſpecially when as we think amongſt our Friends, we are apt to Indulgè to an eaſie *Openneſs* and *Freedom*; the kindly Flow of Spirits, occaſion'd by agreeable Company, *unlocks* an undeſigning Perſons Breaſt, and ſhews his Mind in its *Pure Naturals*. And this indeed it is, that gives the true Guſt and *Reliſh* to Society, which preſently grows *Pall'd* and *Flat*, when every one's upon the *Stiff* and the *Reſerve*.

But

But now, for a ſly underhand *Obſerver*, to feign a Compliance with all this, and it may be ſpeak much in Commendation of it, and in the mean time make it his Buſineſs to *Remark* upon every thing that's ſaid and done, and then turn *Informer* where-e're he goes, and endeavour either to redicule his Company, or ſet them and their Neighbours together by the Ears; this Turns Society into a *Civil War*, and makes Neighbourhood as uneaſy as living upon the Confines of an Enemy.

And after all, what Advantage has the Wretch *himſelf*, by this *Double* Treachery, of ſcrewing himſelf Firſt into *this* Man's Intimacy by his counterfeit Civilities, and then into *that* Man's Favour by his Ill-natur'd Cenſures and Reflections upon him? What does he get by all this, but the loſs of his own *Reputation*, as one that delights to make *Miſchief*, a Betrayer of Society, and that can afford no Man a good word, and ſometimes 'tis more *Fatal* to him, and engages him in ſuch a way of *Juſtifying* himſelf, as coſts him his Life.

Which

Which brings to my Mind that Saying of *David*, *Pſal.* 55. *laſt verſe*, *The Deceitful Man*, or Treacherous Friend, whom he was before complaining of, *ſhall not live out half his days.*

Wherefore, for a Cloſe of this Advice; tho' I am far from Pleading for the *moroſe* and *rude*, yet I can't but think, that upon all Accounts 'twould be very happy for every one to be as ſparing of his *Complements* as he can, and with all as ſparing of his *Cenſures*. To make *Truth* and *Sincerity* the Guide of his *Civilities*, and chooſe, in his Converſation, to talk of *Things* rather than of *Perſons*; and when of Perſons, to ſay no worſe of any one behind his *Back*, than he would freely do before his *Face*; or rather, nothing that is *Ill* at all, ſince 'tis by no means fair to fix ill things upon a Man, who is not *Preſent* to make his own *Defence.*

And ſince, what we have been diſcourſing of is but too much the *Breeding* and *Accompliſhment*, as well as *Practice*

tice of the World; 'twill be our Wisdom not to be too credulous when fine things are said to us, and to be as *wary* as is possible in our common Intercourse, that we give no *Advantage* to the Lurking Adversary; and Reserve those *Freedoms*, and that Innocent *Openness* of Conversation, (which is the Life of Society, as that's the Life of Life) for such as by long Experience we *know* to be *Indeed our Friends.*

And if to this we add all the Discouragement we can to such whose trade it is to be *Busy-Bodies*, and to fetch and carry Stories and Reports, not at all to listen to, or shew our selves pleas'd with 'em, but rather Reprove and Check 'em, and shun their Company, and fairly acquaint the Parties concern'd, how bold such and such have been with their Reputation, and caution 'em against them for the Future; this would soon break the neck of this vile Practice, which is kept up by that *Countenance* which is given to it, and the satisfaction too many shew in hearing others censur'd and expos'd, and

and the great Curioſity they have of prying into the Concerns of their Neighbours.

Let us therefore take the Apoſtles excellent Advice, and *ſtudy to be quiet, and to do our own Buſineſs; to Love one another without Diſſimulation*; to be candid in our Cenſures and Interpretations; and in all things reſolve to *do as we would be done by*: And then, we ſhall find Society, not only more *Safe*, but really more *Pleſant* and *Endearing*, than all the *Addreſs*, and Modiſh *Courtſhips*, poſſibly can make it. 1 Theſ. 4. 11. Rom. 12. 9.

Nothing does *ſweeten* a Diſpoſition more, than True Religion, and which is All in all; it makes a Man *Sincere* in his Civilities; and from the Heart as obliging both in Words and Actions, as Truth and Innocence will Permit. This is true Chriſtian *Good Breeding*; and whatever is *more* or *leſs* than this, *cometh of Evil*. *More*, is but Fawning and Flattery, and as we have ſeen, of very Dangerous Conſequence; and *Leſs*, is Salvage and Bruti-

tiſh, and unbecoming a Man and a Chriſtian: He only that keeps the *Middle* Way, is a Man of Temper, and fit to be a *Friend.*

The

The Tenth Advice.

AND now, becauſe the Happieſt of us all, *Young* as well as Old, can't but think it very poſſible for the Scene to be chang'd, and it may be ſuddenly, and a ſad Alteration made in our Circumſtances; and the *beſt* of us all muſt Acknowledge (and the better we are, the more readily ſhall we do it) that ſuch a Change would be no more than we *Deſerve*: It will not be amiſs ſometimes to *remind* our ſelves of it, and Arm our ſelves *before-hand* with ſuch Conſiderations, as may Enable us to bear what Trouble may come upon us, as becomes Men and Chriſtians. Advice to

When we are eaſy and happy, our Thoughts are our *own*, and we can with-

without Diſturbance weigh and compare things together; but when *Affliction* is either actually upon us, or very near approaching, the *Surprize*, and Confuſion of Thought that is caus'd by it, is apt to make us very uncapable of thorough Reaſoning and Conſideration.

The proper Time therefore to lay in Arguments againſt immoderate Trouble, and which, by our often revolving 'em in our Thoughts, may make ſo laſting an Impreſſion as to become our *own*, and ſerviceable to us upon Occaſion; the Time for this ſo Neceſſary a Proviſion is *before the Evil Days come.* And this is ſo far from being an *unſuitable* Employment for Young Perſons, that nothing can be more needful upon all Accounts. 'Twill be a good *Allay* ſometimes to that *Levity* of Temper, which very often proceeds too far, and Tranſports 'em to great Irregularities, and *haſtens* Misfortunes ſooner than otherwiſe they would come;

come; and 'twill quiet and *ſettle* their Spirits, and induce that *Seriouſneſs* of Mind, which is neceſſary to their ſucceſsful Management of any of their Affairs, and that Good Counſel in any Inſtance, may take place and be effectual. And beſides, if we conſider how very apt Trouble is to riſe to *exceſſive* degrees, and get too great a Head to be maſter'd by us; no doubt but 'tis our Wiſdom to make *early* Proviſion againſt it, ſuch as both *Reaſon* and *Religion* will plentifully furniſh us withal; that ſo thoſe fatal Exceſſes of Trouble may be prevented, which have prov'd to very many the Ruine both of Body and Soul.

And in order to this, let us firſt conſider, how *unreaſonable* a thing it is to indulge and *give way* to Trouble, and lay Afflictions ſo extreamly to Heart, as we are apt to do, when from eaſie and proſperous Circumſtances we fall into them.

The proper buſineſs of *Reaſon*, is ſo to regulate the Paſſions, as to make them *ſerviceable*, but by no means ſuffer them to be *prejudicial* to us. Now all the Good that *Trouble* can do a Man, when he ſees an Evil approaching, or feels the preſent Weight and Preſſure of it; is, that 'twill rouſe and excite his Endeavours to *prevent* and *remove* it; or, at leaſt, to *alleviate*, and make it more ſupportable. But, when inſtead of this, we ſuffer it to grow ſo much upon us, as either in that degree to *ſink* our Spirits, as to make us lie down under our Burthen as utterly without Hope; or elſe to raiſe 'em to the pitch of *Frenzy*, and engage us in Courſes that are deſperate and wicked: This certainly is no likely way to bring our Troubles to an end, unleſs it be a very *fatal* one.

Becauſe a Man has loſt one, or a *few* Bleſſings, therefore to take no notice of thoſe *many* others that remain; becauſe, in ſome reſpects, he is

is *leſs* happy than he was, therefore to reſolve not to be happy *at all*, and give way to a Paſſion, which, he knows, will make him very miſerable: Becauſe his Troubles are great, therefore to refuſe to be comforted, and muſe continually upon the *Dark* ſide of his Condition, and make it doubly Afflicting by Impatience; becauſe the Weight is heavy, therefore to add to it ſtill more and more, by all the Aggravations he can think of: To indulge and cheriſh what we complain of and groan under, and to hug Miſery ſo cloſe, that neither Reaſon nor Religion, God nor Man, ſhall perſwade us to part with it and let it go; to ſuffer neither Time nor Sleep to do their proper Offices, and calm the Boilings of our Spirits, but inceſſantly add Fuel to that Flame, under the Scorchings of which we at the ſame time cry out, and which we can't but know will at length conſume and burn us up. Let any Man in his Senſes ſay, whether this (which is but too much the way of People in Affli-

ction) is not againſt all the *Reaſon* in the World.

Nor is it leſs contrary to *Religion*; which conſiſts in nothing more than a firm Belief and Truſt in Divine *Providence*, patient Submiſſion to God's Will, Contempt of the World, and careful Imitation of our Lord's Example; with each of which immoderate Trouble is utterly inconſiſtent.

For, *Firſt*, Who that has a lively ſtrong Perſwaſion, that a Being infinitely Wiſe and Good does conſtantly take Care of him, and order all things relating to him; but will *check* rather than *cheriſh* the Uneaſineſs of his Mind under any of *his* Diſpoſals: And however irkſom it may be to him at firſt, make it his Buſineſs to *reconcile* himſelf to it, and fully acquieſce in it, as being the Reſult of Infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and therefore for the *beſt*, tho' he can't at all diſcern, perhaps, at preſent, how it ſhould be ſo.

And

And this he will find ſtill greater Reaſon to do, when he conſiders, That as he believes *God* to be Infinitely *Wiſe* and *Good*, ſo by conſtant ſad Experience he finds, that *Himſelf* is very ſhort-ſighted and ignorant, fooliſh and wicked; can ſee but a little way into the Conſequences of Things, is very much miſtaken and corrupted in his Choices, and would be very miſerable, ſhould God beſtow upon him every thing that he deſires. And therefore, tho' ſuch a Loſs, or ſuch and ſuch an Infliction may at firſt touch him to the very *quick*; yet he quiets all again by conſidering, that taking all things together, 'tis what *ought* to be, and will be for the *beſt*, and that Time will evidently demonſtrate it to be ſo, and that it cannot *but* be ſo, ſince 'tis order'd by him who is infinitely *Wiſe* and *Good*, and withall ſo *Powerful*, that no *Affliction* can be too great for him to remove, when his Wiſdom and his Goodneſs ſee it fit to do ſo.

Infinite *Wiſdom* knows beſt *when*; and Infinite *Goodneſs* will not ſuffer it to laſt a Moment longer; and Infinite *Power* can remove it with a *Word.*

Again, (as is evident at the firſt Glance) exceſſive Trouble is very unbecoming a Chriſtian, becauſe 'tis utterly inconſiſtent with *Patience*; which is that Temper of Mind, whereby a Chriſtian calmly and quietly bears all Preſſures, however heavy and afflicting, with entire Submiſſion to the Divine Will, as being aſſur'd, that God's great Deſign, tho' by various Methods, is to make us compleatly happy. He that thus *evenly* behaves himſelf under the Diſcipline of Providence, and will not be tempted to think ill of God, or Deſert his Service, tho' he ſmarts under his Corrections, nor take *Ill* Courſes to remove his Trouble; this is the *Patient* Chriſtian: And the more he may be *ſenſible* of Affliction, in other reſpects, the

the greater is his Patience, if he thus calmly and quietly *ſubmits.*

Very remarkable are our Saviour's Words to his Apoſtles, when he fore-told them what they ſhould ſuffer for his ſake, and ſuch as beſpeak this quiet ſubmiſſive Temper to be the Great Security of all our other Duty; *Poſſeſs ye your Souls in Patience.* As if without it ev'n a Man's *Soul*, all the Powers of it, not only his Will and Affections, but his very *Underſtanding* could not be his own; but perfectly at the Command of any other, who could lay more Troubles on him than he had Patience to bear. And therefore the Scripture frequently joins *Faith* and *Patience* together, as each others *Mutual Support.* Luk. 21. 19. Heb. 6. 12. ---10. 36.

And indeed, in a World ſo thick ſet with Troubles and Vexations, *Woe be to him*, as the Wiſe Man ſays, *that has loſt Patience; and what will he do when the Lord ſhall viſit him?* That is, when God ſhall lay any great Ca- Eccl. 2. 15.

lamity upon him, how will he do to bear it, who can bear nothing with any tolerable Temper, not ſo much as common Croſſes and Diſappointments!

Another great Duty of our Holy Religion, is, *Contempt of the World*; or at leaſt ſuch an *Indifference* to it, as that we may hang looſe from things below, and employ our chief Care and Endeavour, to make ſure of our Mat. 19. 26. Glorious Reverſion above. *Lay not up for your ſelves Treaſures upon Earth*, ſays our Lord, *but in Heaven*; *for where your Treaſure is, there will your Hearts be alſo.* What ſhall we think then of their *Religion*, who are ſo inſeparably faſtned to the World in their Affections, as not to be able to bear any of its Frowns, without an exceſſive Concern, as if their whole Happineſs was torn from them, and nothing worth their Notice left, to hope for or expect! What we lightly eſteem, we can eaſily part with, and live contentedly without; eſpecially if what we value moſt of all, be ſecure

and

and ſafe. If therefore we had Religion enough to fix our Hearts there, where our Heavenly Treaſure is, and ſet a due Eſtimate upon it, and believed it as *certain* to the Sincerely Good, as it is *Glorious* and *Everlaſting*, and look'd upon the World as empty in Compariſon and of no Eſteem; we ſhould with much leſs *Regrett* part with the *Enjoyments* of it than we do, and bear its *Troubles* with more *Sedateneſs* and Evenneſs of Temper.

I don't ſay with *no Concern at all*, for that's Impoſſible; and during our Abode in the ſtate of Mortality, there are many things ſo neceſſary to our Support and Comfort in it, that as we may and ought to *Pray* for 'em, and be thankful when we receive 'em, ſo may we in Due Degree deſire to *keep* them, and be *Loath* to part with 'em; and when they're gone, reſent their Loſs. But then, all this muſt be Temper'd with ſo prevailing a Mixture of *Heavenly-mindedneſs*, as may ſoon make us

us loſe our Reſentment of any Worldly Croſſes, in the cheering Thoughts of what a Glorious *Reverſion* we have in the Kingdom of God.

This is the True Noble Spirit of Chriſtianity, which makes a Man ſo much *Above* theſe little things of Earth, as to permit no more than a *Tranſient* Uneaſineſs to affect him, at the loſs of any of them; reflecting preſently upon theſe Immenſe Treaſures of Eternal Happineſs, which are *Reſerv'd in Heaven for Him*, and which his Comparatively *Light Afflictions* Here, do only ſerve to raiſe his Value of, and increaſe his Deſire of enjoying.

Nothing more demonſtrates the Strength and *Power* of Religion than this, nor does any thing more betray the Weakneſs and *Infirmity* of it than the contrary.

In the Laſt Place, *Immoderate* Trouble removes a Man to a vaſt diſtance from

from the Temper and Example of *Jeſus* our Bleſſed Saviour.

For if we enquire how he behav'd himſelf under thoſe almoſt continual Troubles which he met with, we ſhall find no Turbulency of Paſſion, no Murmurings and Repinings, but a quiet Reſignation of Soul, a Calm Sedateneſs of Demeanour, an entire Truſt in God, and an Admirable Charity to the worſt of his Enemies. This, the Story of his whole Life will Witneſs; and when his Days grew near their End, with what incomparable Patience and Submiſſion to the Divine Will, did he receive the bitter Cup of his approaching Sufferings!

Father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me; there are expreſs'd the feeling Reſentments of reluctting Nature: *Nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt*; there is his entire Acquieſcence in God's Will concerning him.

And

And when he Actually *Sufferd* what was ſo Dreadful to him in the *Expectation*, with what Meekneſs, and Silence, and Wondrous Decency, and Preſence of Mind did he demean himſelf, and that under the ſharpeſt Afflictions both of Body and Soul! And when, in the midſt of his Agonies upon the Croſs, he was Barbarouſly Inſulted by the Mercileſs Spectators; all they could Provoke him to utter was this ſtrangely Good Prayer, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do.*

This is our *Lord*'s Example in this matter, and which, in ſome meaſure at leaſt, he expects that we ſhould Imitate; and 'tis a great part of our Religion to do ſo.

But now, if we're ſo far from this, as to *Indulge* that Paſſion to *Exceſs*, which our Lord's Practice, as well as Precept, engages us to keep under and *Controul*; if *we* loſe all Patience when

when we're afflicted, tho' our *Lord* when he was ſo, was a Perfect *Lamb*; if *we* can bear *nothing*, when our great *Maſter* with admirable Temper did bear ſo *much*, and that too, for our *ſakes*, and in our *ſtead*: If Chriſt and Chriſtians are ſo very much unlike in this Reſpect, what is their Religion!

Such Conſiderations as theſe, if we go no further, will let us ſee both how unreaſonable and unchriſtian a thing it is, to ſuffer Trouble to proceed without Reſtraint.

But 'twill not be amiſs to endeavour to prevent ſo great an Evil, by one Reflection more upon the Nature and Deſign of all Affliction; which is intended by God as a Means to Cure the Diſeaſes of the Soul, and a Fatherly Correction for former Faults.

But now, *Exceſſive* Trouble, utterly hinders the Operation and good Effect,

Effect, and turns the Medicine into Poiſon, and gentle Chaſtiſement into Ruine and Deſtruction. A ſtrange Ill Diſpoſition this! and which we can't begin too ſoon to rectify.

When the Rod is in the Hand of Infinite Love, and Kindneſs infinitely greater than we bear unto our ſelves, proportions the Weight and Number of the Strokes; in the Name of God, what Cauſe is there for ſuch great Degrees of Trouble? I believe there are but very few ſo Intirely Heedleſs of the Methods of Divine Providence, as not to have Obſerv'd, and to Remember the Wondrous Mixture of God's Goodneſs with his Puniſhments; what an Aſcendant his Mercy hath had over his Juſtice, and how Happily, and ſometimes Unexpectedly, he hath put an End to his Publick and Private Corrections!

Which of our *ſelves* have not enjoy'd much more of Happineſs than we

we have felt of Trouble and Affliction? And even *in the midſt of Sorrows of our Hearts*, how have God's Divine *Comforts* in an unaccountable manner *Refreſh'd our Souls!* Pſal. 94. 19.

What unthought of Happy Events have prevented, or put an End to, former Misfortunes that have Threatned or been upon us; and many things brought about by a ſtrange *Series* of good Providences, which have Surpriz'd us into full Happineſs before we were aware!

Let any Reaſonable Man therefore ſay, whether it is not the Wiſeſt and moſt Chriſtian Courſe, after Humbly Acknowledging *God*'s Hand in every Affliction, and ſearching out Diligently for the Cauſe of it; to endeavour, by ſincere Repentance and Amendment, to Cloſe with the Gracious Deſign of it; and ſo, either keep it off when it only Threatens, or encline God to Remove it, if Actually upon us; and then

then *Buoy* up our Spirits in a full Perſwaſion that all will end in our Good?

That Bleſſed Being, who formerly ſo Graciouſly, and Surprizingly, Diverted, or put an End to my own, or others Afflictions, is as Good, and Wiſe, and Powerful as ever; why then ſhould I Deſpair of the like Mercy again, (tho' I can't foreſee it may be *how* it ſhould be,) from him who changeth not, and can do what he pleaſeth?

Prov. 18. 14 *The Spirit of a Man*, ſays Solomon, *will ſuſtain his Infirmity*; and ſuch Thoughts as theſe will ſuſtain the Spirit of a Man, and enable him with a Chriſtian Steadineſs of Mind, to bear what God ſhall pleaſe to lay upon him. *But a wounded Spirit who can bear!* A mind pierc'd through with Impatience and Diſtruſt of Providence, is it ſelf a Burthen more intollerable than any other Affliction in the World.

But

But after all, that what has been already ſaid may be throughly effectual, let us not forget to take St. *James*'s Advice along with us, and *if any man be afflicted, let him Pray.* Excellent Advice indeed it is, and no greater Conſolation can a wounded Spirit receive, than in *Calling upon God in the Time of Her Trouble.* For He is the Fountain of Comfort, and the Great Diſpoſer of all Things; 'tis His Grace and Holy Spirit that muſt teach us Reſignation and Submiſſion to His Will; and if we make devout Addreſſes to Him, and with a calm and even mind await His *Leiſure*; we may in his Good Time expect to ſee our Troubles have a Happy end: *For God will not always be Puniſhing, neither keepeth He his Anger for ever.* Wherefore to cloſe this Advice; ſince there is no Man living that is ſecure againſt *Affliction*, and *Comfort* in it is what every one Deſires; and very few when Trouble is actually upon 'em, are either able to give it to *themſelves*, or *capable* of Receiving it from Jam. 5. 13.

Others; I could not but think it, as I ſaid, of great Advantage to Young Perſons, to furniſh 'em with ſuch Conſiderations *before-hand*, as may be of uſe to prevent exceſs of *Melancholly* and Dejection, or any *Deſperate* and unjuſtifiable Undertakings; and Prepare 'em to Comfort themſelves, under the ſevereſt Diſpenſations of Providence, with that patience and *evenneſs* of Temper, which becomes the *Reaſon* of a Man, and the *Faith* of a Chriſtian.

The Eleventh Advice.

Advice 11. HAving in the Foregoing Advices endeavour'd to *Prevent* ſuch Errors and Miſtakes in Young Gentlemens *Faith* and *Practice*, as they are moſt *Apt* to fall into, and which are of unſpeakable ill Conſequence; give me leave now to ſuppoſe, that things have not been manag'd

nag'd by them as they *ſhould* be, and ſome of thoſe many Temptations they are ſurrounded with, have been too Succeſsful, and robb'd 'em of their Innocence, and engag'd them in ſome Courſes that cannot be juſtified: So that to the former *Preſervatives*, 'twill be needful to add ſome few Advices more, in order to their *Recovery*.

And Firſt, let me earneſtly Recommend to them a frequent ſerious *ſelf-Examination*; a Particular enquiry into their Thoughts, Actions, and Diſcourſes, what they are, and have been, and whether they are and have been as they *ſhould* be, and to what *end* and Concluſion they *tend*.

And this is not only a highly *Beneficial* Employment, as we ſhall ſee by and by, but 'tis a very *Eaſie* one too; for there is no Reaſonable Man's Memory ſo extreamly treacherous, but if duly Conſulted, will inform Him of matters of *Fact* which are His *Dayly* Practice, that is, in the *Main*;

for ſome Particulars no doubt may eſcape the niceſt Examination. And when the enquiry is made, there is ſomething *within* that will *Accuſe* or *Excuſe*, Acquit or Condemn *immediately*; and let us ſee the Tendency of our Good or Bad Actions reſpectively, without any *Tedious Proceſs*, or long ſeries of Argumentation.

For the plain Truth, and which we all of us know very well, is in ſhort *this*. If we Guide our ſteps to the beſt of our Power and Knowledge by the Rule of Reaſon and Religion, and endeavour to follow where our Saviour has gone before; and are willing to liſten to, and be Directed by the Guides that God has Provided us when we are at a Loſs, or have miſtaken our Path; then we need not Queſtion but we're in the way that Leads to *Life* and *Glory*: And if we perſiſt and go on in it, let it be Broad or Narrow, Rough or Smooth, upon the Mountains or in the Valleys, or the like; and tho' we ſometimes, nay often make a *falſe*

ſtep,

ſtep, yet thro' the Merits of our Saviour, and the Guidance of his Bleſſed Spirit, we ſhall at length arrive at a Happy Journey's end.

But if on the contrary, we find that our Diſpoſitions are *earthly, ſenſual, and deviliſh*, that we live *without God in the World*, are Licentious and Unchriſtian, directly oppoſite to Chriſt's Precept and Example, in open Defiance to Religion, or if more Fair in outward ſhew, yet without *Sincerity*: Such ways as theſe are the ways that lead to *Miſery* and *Ruin*, not only in the World to *come*, but ev'n in *this* too. And whoever goes on in 'em without controul, and will not be recall'd, will at length, and very likely before He is aware, after all the Misfortunes he has run through here, find himſelf a miſerable Inhabitant of the Place *prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

Now by *Frequent* Self-Examination, I mean no leſs than *Daily*; that every Night when we're retir'd from

the World, and the noiſe and hurry of that day's Stage is over, and we have taken up our Lodging to Refreſh our ſelves for the next; then, as *David* expreſſes it, *to commune with our own Hearts in our Chamber and be ſtill.* That is, without Prejudice or Paſſion, to Conſider quietly and ſeriouſly, as in the Preſence of God Omniſcient, *who is about our Path, and about our Bed, and ſpyeth out all our ways,* what our behaviour that Day actually *hath* been, and what it *ſhould* have been, and Conſequently to which *State* we have been Travelling, to the Kingdom of Life and Glory, or to the Regions of Eternal Death?

Pſ. 4. 4.

Pſ. 139.

And this Daily Scrutiny into our Lives and Converſations is ſo agreeable to *Reaſon*, that Heathen Philoſophy did particularly Recommend it, and 'tis one of the Golden Precepts, as they are deſervedly call'd, of the School of *Pythagoras*; *Admit not ſleep to cloſe your eyes, till you have recollected thrice each ſingle Action of the day, and ask'd your ſelves ſuch Queſtions*

ons as theſe. Wherein have I tranſgreſſed? What have I done? What Duty have I omitted? Run over theſe things, beginning at the Firſt, and then, if you have done ill, be Troubled; if well, Rejoyce.

What can be more excellently ſaid than this? What more uſeful Practice can there be in this our *Pilgrimage*, (as the Scripture calls our Life, and really it is no other) than at the cloſe of every Stage thus to look back upon our Goings, obſerve where we have err'd and wandred, at what we ſtumbled and fell, upon what Motives and Temptations, that ſo we may Prevent the next Day the miſcarriages of this, ſee our Error before it is too late, return before we have wandred too far, ſet a greater value upon our Guides, more heedfully obſerve their Directions, and be the more wary and circumſpect in our future Journeys, for being ſo eaſily thrown down, deceived and led aſide in thoſe that are paſt. How much eaſier is it to Recollect and

Amend the miſcarriages of a *Day*, than of *Months*, or *Years*? And Conſequently, how much ſafer is it for every Man thus to Conſider his ways whilſt his Memory can tell Him what they were, and whilſt 'tis in his Power with ſo much eaſe to amend them if they are *amiſs*; than to go careleſly on, till for want of Examining, he takes the Wrong way for the Right, gets a habit of going aſtray, and ſo becomes not ſenſible of his Error, till 'tis too late to Mend it; or at leaſt has wandred ſo long, that the difficulty of Recovering the right way is almoſt Inſuperable!

No better Office certainly, than to direct a Stranger in the Road that He ſhould take, to warn Him of Dangers that He may meet with in it, and to lead Him back and ſet Him Right, when He has loſt his Way: Eſpecially when He is in *Haſte*, and *Night* is coming on, and the Buſineſs he goes about of greateſt *Conſequence*.

Now

Now nothing can be of greater Conſquence than the Journey of a Chriſtian through the World; He Travels upon *Eternal Life and Death*; His Journey is Great, and therefore He had need to loſe no Time; and the Night with every Man is coming on apace, and no Man can tell how ſoon it may be Night with *Him*; and 'tis a *long* Night too, and may be *Eternal*, and will certainly put an end to His Journey whenever it overtakes Him, whether it be to Heaven or to Hell. And therefore thoſe Conſiderations that will ſet us right in our way, and expedite our Great Buſineſs, and help to Conduct us ſafely to that Happy Place where we all would be, are no doubt well employ'd.

But for all this, Young People I'm afraid will not be very eaſily Perſuaded to put this Advice in Practice; and therefore the more need to preſs it earneſtly upon them. They look upon it as a very uncomfortable

way

Way of Travelling, to be ſtill *Doubting* whether they are right or no, continually *Enquiring*, and liſt'ning to every melancholly or deſigning Perſon, that ſhall pretend to give them better Directions. If now and then a miſgiving Thought ariſes, 'tis ſmother'd preſently by Buſineſs or Pleaſure; and when a Guide of Souls is met with who Faithfully informs them of the way they ought to take, tells them they're in the wrong, and muſt turn back if they would ſee their wiſh'd for Journey's end, and that *That* Path will lead them to their Ruin: They look upon this as a Greeting of *Courſe* from Men of their *Profeſſion*, and make it their endeavour to Perſuade Him to go along with *Them*, rather than think of turning back with *Him*. However, let Him take his *own* Courſe, they are reſolv'd ſtill to follow *theirs*; 'tis the way they have been us'd to, and which offers it ſelf readyeſt and faireſt to them, and is ſmooth and pleaſant, the Entertainment good, and moſt of their Friends and Acquaintance

quaintance, it may be, do bear 'em Company in it; ſo that very loath they are to make too nice Enquiries, leſt they ſhould be made ſenſible of the neceſſity of Performing ſo ungrateful a Task, as with many a weary ſtep to beat the Hoof back again, and turn their Feet into a Track they have no Mind to.

But in ſhort, would this be Prudence in our Journeyings here in *this* World? And why ſhould not our Judgment be the ſame with Reſpect to the *Other?*

We need not be told, I ſuppoſe, that here we are Strangers, *have no abiding City, but ſeek one to come*; where when we once Arrive, we ſhall be for ever fix'd as in our proper Place of Abode, our *Home.*

That other World conſiſts of *Two*, and *but* two States, the one Infinitely Happy, the other as Infinitely Miſerable.

To

To these two States there are two Highways that lead, which tho' they meet in a *Point* at the beginning, yet *Widen* Insensibly and Infinitely, and at length, become as far distant from each other, as Heaven is from Hell.

And therefore in all Reason, as our *First* Care should be to *set out* Well, so our *next*, immediately to turn *Back*, if we perceive that we have gone *amiss*. For every step that we then take, carries us further and further wide from Heaven, and nearer to Destruction.

Well then, if this Daily Self-Examination be of such vast Consequence, what ever will make us *uncapable* of it, should carefully be avoided, Particularly *Unseasonable* and *Intemperate* Drinking. How can He close his Day with such a serious *Scrutiny* as we have now been speaking of, who has *staid so long at the Wine*, as to be able to think coherently of *nothing*, and

and who is fitter for a *Frolic*, or for ſleep than *Meditation*? A conſtant Practice of *Night-Revels* is upon all Accounts a moſt unhappy thing, but upon none more ſo than becauſe it unfits a Man for this great Duty; whereby He becomes a Stranger to himſelf, and his own Proceedings, and that in matters of the greateſt Moment; and all this for a Belly-full of Liquor, and empty frothy Mirth.

Moderate Wine, and ſeaſonable well choſen Converſation, are Bleſſings which our Holy Religion does by no means Envy us. Certainly, I may enjoy my *Friend* without forgetting my *ſelf*, and have the ſatisfaction of *others* Company, without making my ſelf unfit for my *own*.

And I Queſtion not, but upon tryal, any Man will find thoſe Days ſpent moſt to his Satisfaction, which are clos'd with a ſerious Reflection upon his ways at Night: And all that I further deſire of Young Perſons upon this Particular, is, that they

they would immediately try the Experiment, and beg the Aſſiſtance of God in thoſe excellent Words of the 139 *Pſ. ult. Try me O God, and ſee the ground of my Heart, Prove me and examine my Thoughts; look well if there be any way of wickedneſs in me, and lead me in the way Everlaſting.*

The Twelfth Advice.

Advice 12. WHEN upon ſuch *Enquiry*, or by the kind Admonition of their Friends, or both, Young Perſons begin to ſee their Errors; let 'em above all things have a care, upon any Account whatever, of ſhutting their Eyes againſt ſuch Convictions of their own Minds, and of being Deaf to good Counſel and Advice. That is, let 'em beware of *Stubborneſs* and *Obſtinacy*, and *wilful Ignorance*, or non-Attention to the great Obligations that Religion and their

their own true Intereſt do lay upon them.

None are ſo Deaf, we ſay, as thoſe that *will* not Hear; none ſo *Provokingly* Wicked and hard to be Reform'd, as thoſe who Induſtriouſly ſet themſelves to keep out any Thought that may check them in their Carreer, and incline 'em to Return; whom no Calls will awaken, no Argmuents Perſuade ſo much as to *think* of Amendment; and who *like the deaf Adder, ſtop their Ears to the voice of the Charmer, charm he never ſo wiſely.*

This ſort of Men, think they ſhall be undone, if they once give ear to Perſuaſives to Religion; that 'twill Deprive them of what they eſteem as their Happineſs, and draw 'em into the ſnare of a few deſigning Men, who will Lord it over their Liberty, hamper 'em with ſevere Impracticable Rules, turn 'em into Mopes, and inſtead of allowing them their former Pleaſures, be continually reading

ing Lectures to 'em of *Self-denyal*, *Mortification*, and *Repentance*, and all in Hopes of an *unseen* Reward, no Body knows *when* nor *where*. And because they can't but own, however, that something very powerfully moving is in such Discourses, something that touches 'em in an unaccountable manner, ev'n forces Approbation from them, and as 'twere *Charms* 'em into a Compliance; therefore they're Resolv'd they'l *stop their Ears*, and so defeat the Holy *Magic* of these *Mercenary Charmers*.

This is that wilful Spiritual *Deafness* so often mention'd in Scripture; when, as our Lord expresses it, Hearing the Sermons of the Gospel, *Men hear not, neither do they understand*, (or Attend and Consider, as 'tis in the Original) in order to their suitable Practice; and therefore He so often useth this Expression, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*. There is likewise a wilful Blindness of the Soul, whereby the Scripture Represents to us Wicked Mens

Mens Diſregarding all *Inward Conviction* of their own *Minds*, and keeping themſelves as *Ignorant* as they can of their *Guilt* and of their *Duty*, and the neceſſity of a Reformation; and which is very emphatically expreſſed, *Mat.* 13. 15. *This Peoples heart is waxed groſs*, Επαχύνθη ἡ καρδία, grown *Callous* and Inſenſible, thro' an overcharge of the Pleaſures of the World, *and their Ears are dull of hearing*, as before explain'd, *and their eyes have they clos'd*, Ἐκάμμυσαν, they have *wink'd hard*; as we ſhut our Eyes haſtily and ſtrongly, when we fear the approach of any thing *offenſive* to them; *leſt at any time they ſhould ſee with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and underſtand with their Heart, and be Converted, and I ſhould heal them.*

Now the *Underſtanding* is the *Eye* of the *Soul*, or that Faculty whereby the Mind receives the Light of Truth and Knowledge; of which Light there is now, thanks be to God, abundant Plenty ſtream'd

1 John 9. down from Him who is the *True Light that enlightneth every Man that cometh into the World*; and which whoſoever will *receive* may *enjoy*, and that according to his *full capacity*.

But as the *Material* Light may be intercepted by the interpoſition of Bodies too cloſe for it to penetrate; or, as the Eye may be *incapabable* of receiving its Rays, or wilfully ſhut and cloſe it ſelf, and deny admittance to them, tho' ſhining in full luſtre round about; and upon either of theſe Accounts the Body may remain in Darkneſs: So the Soul may not enjoy *its* proper Light, either thro' the Underſtanding's being not capable of *receiving* it, (which is *unavoidable* Ignorance, the caſe of *Natural Fools*) or elſe for want of a due *medium*, thro' which it may be tranſmitted, ſuch as is Good and Competent *Inſtruction*; (which yet, if by our own *neglect* we want, we cannot plead as an Excuſe) or elſe, our Minds are Ignorant and Dark, becauſe

becauſe we wilfully *Refuſe* to let in any Light or Knowledge to them, will not *admit*, or *attend* to any thing that would Diſpel thoſe miſts of Error and Deluſion, which hang over them as a Dark pitchy Cloud: And *this* is a Blindneſs altogether owing to a Mans *ſelf*, a *Rebelling againſt the Light*, as *Job* Expreſſes it, *Job* 24. 13.

But is it not ſtrange, that Men ſhould ſo delight in this Spiritual *Blindneſs*, as to *force* it upon themſelves! That a Rational Creature ſhould be better pleas'd with the *Darkneſs* and *Confuſion* of his Underſtanding, as to the things of Religion (tho' of all the nobleſt Furniture of our Souls) than with a Bright, Clear, *Godlike* Mind! Nay, ſo *much* better pleas'd as ſtudiouſly to *keep out* all new acceſs of Light, to ſtop up every *Avenue*, every chink and cranny, thro' which it unawares might ſteal into his Soul! This is ſtrange indeed! and the more we Conſider it, the

more we ſhall wonder at it, but yet it is no News.

An *Unthinking* Life guided by the falſe Lights of Humour and Cuſtom, every one may obſerve is the Life that too great numbers of Young People lead; and the great Truths of Religion, and the obligations they derive upon our Practice, if medled with at all, 'tis but *ſlightly* and ſuperficially, one *Glance* and away, and then all is well, if their Hearts are but *Groſs* enough to give them no diſturbance by ſecret *miſgivings*, and inward *gripes* and *twinges*.

And what's the Reaſon of all this, but *Guilt* and the Impurities and Defilements of their Souls? To make too nice Enquiries into their Religious Obligations, would be troubleſome they think to *do*, and much *more* ſo when *done*; and therefore better be *quietly* blind and ignorant in theſe matters, than to have their Eyes *opened* to behold their *miſery* and *ſhame*.

Light

Light is the great Diſcoverer of *Uncleanneſs*, and ſhews it to *be* what *it is*; and who, that *ſo* beholds it, but will for *ſhame*, if nothing elſe, endeavour to *remove* it! When the *Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt ſhines in* upon the Soul of a Sinner, what *ſhameful Diſcoveries* will then be made! How *foul* will it appear even to the wretch *Himſelf*! How exceeding *vile* and ſinful, that which before was cheriſh'd as his *Darling*!

But ſuch Diſcoveries as theſe the Sinner does by no means Deſire ſhould be made; and therefore indeed it is, that He excludes this *Light*. *This is the Condemnation*, ſaith our Lord, *that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are Evil; for every one that doth evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to it, leſt his Deeds ſhould be* Diſcover'd and *Reprov'd*. 3 Joh. 19. 20.

There is ſuch Deformity and *Ghaſtlineſs* in the face of Sin, when ſeen without its Mask in a True Light, as muſt needs Create infinite *Horror* and *Averſion* in the Soul: Witneſs the Opinion a *Dying* Sinner has of it; for then it appears to him Naked and without Diſguiſe. And therefore, *the God of this World, that* great Deceiver, firſt *blinds the Minds of thoſe that are Loſt, darkens their fooliſh Hearts*, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, and then drills 'em on from one Vice to another with falſe *Appearances* of Good, that ſo Wickedneſs and Ignorance may quietly go hand in hand together. And the poor bewitched Creatures are ſo Pleas'd with this infernal State, and ſo us'd to it; that they Conſpire with their Deceiver to lengthen out this fatal Darkneſs till it becomes Eternal.

2 Cor. 4. 4. Rom. 1. 21.

This is a very *diſmal* Condition, and into which People are very apt to ſlide before they are *aware*, and which

which we are now endeavouring to *ſecure* Young Perſons *from*, or *Recover* 'em *out of*, if betray'd into it; and they may know when they are ſo, by asking themſelves ſeriouſly theſe few Queſtions.

When I feel ſome good Motions ſpringing up in my Mind, in order to my leaving ſome ill Courſes that I am engag'd in, don't I preſently *check* 'em, and Divert my Thoughts to ſomething elſe?

When I have had a *Glimps* of the *foulneſs* of Sin, and the *Miſery* that will at laſt attend it, by a gleam of Light from above ſhot, unexpectedly into my Soul; how have I behaved my ſelf under ſuch beginnings of Conviction? Have I been *glad* of that Diſcovery, and endeavour'd to let ſtill *more* Light in, by opening the Eye of my Underſtanding, weighing and Conſidering things more thoroughly than formerly, ſearching the Scriptures, Adviſing with good Books, and good Men, and

Praying God *to make my Darkneſs to be Light*; or have I not rather been in *pain* till I had *chas'd* the Light *away*, and *skreen'd* my Soul from its unwelcome Rays, by clapping the *World* between, thruſting my ſelf into buſineſs or Company, or any thing that might keep out ſuch uneaſy Thoughts, as the Diſcovery of my inward Pollutions would raiſe within me? And ſpeak ſincerely, is not a fondneſs for Sin, a ſecret Reſolution to continue in it, and a fear of being too Powerfully inclin'd to mortifie and deſtroy it; is not *this* at the bottom of all?

The Anſwer that every Man's own Conſcience will make to theſe few Queſtions, will inform him whether he is of the Number of the ſpiritually *Blind* or not, and who beſides are always *Deaf*, as was ſaid, to what Advices may be given for their Recovery. And their Condition is really ſo Deplorable (as we ſhall ſee preſently) that nothing more nearly concerns every Man than to uſe his

his utmoſt endeavours to ſecure himſelf from it.

By what has been hitherto ſaid, concerning a ſtubborn Obſtinacy in wicked Courſes, we ſee the Scripture repreſents ſuch Perſons, as ſpiritually both *Deaf* and *Blind*; as is the Condition then of thoſe that are *Naturally* ſo, *ſuch*, tho' infinitely *worſe*, is theirs that are ſo to *Religion*. And 'twill not be amiſs to conſider this Repreſentation a little.

To be *Blind* is certainly a very great Misfortune, and to be *Deaf* perhaps a greater; and how helpleſs and diſconſolate the Condition of either is, we may a little imagine from what we have obſerv'd of the Circumſtances of each, and from theſe Mens own moanings and Complaints.

Senſes that are ſo *Recreating*, and ſo *Inſtructive*, that convey ſo much *Pleaſure* and ſo much *Knowledge* to the Soul; Pleaſure of a Refin'd and Spiritual Nature, and Knowledge the

the moſt neceſſary and Beneficial: the loſs of *either* muſt needs make a ſtrange alteration in a Man, and be an unſpeakable Affliction.

How *Deplorable* then is the Condition of thoſe that have loſt 'em *both*! Our imagination is quiet *Confounded*, when we would frame an *Idea* of it.

Neither to *hear*, nor to *ſee*, is in effect to be out of the *World*; 'tis as if a Man ſhould be ſhut up in a dark Cave, in the midſt of an unfrequented Deſart, without other Company than his own ſad Thoughts and diſmal Reflections. For continual Darkneſs, and Silence, and Solitude, is the ſad Portion of the *both Deaf* and *Blind*, tho' in the midſt of their neareſt Relations and beſt Friends.

The loſs of but *one* of theſe noble Senſes, may be very much made up by the free uſe and Enjoyment of the *other*, together with the charitable

ritable aſſiſtance of good Perſons who enjoy them *both.* The *Eye*, by the help of Books and Writing, may let in thoſe Diſcourſes to the Mind, which us'd to be tranſmitted thro' the *Ear*; and *ſigns* may keep up that Friendly intercourſe and Society, and communicate thoſe Thoughts to one another which us'd to be convey'd in *Sounds.*

And the *Ear*, ſo far as concerns the Improvement of the Mind, may by others Reading and Diſcourſe mightily ſupply our want of Ability to Conſult Books our ſelves. Such *ſhifts* as theſe, may in ſome meaſure alleviate the Misfortune of being either Blind or Deaf, and make it tollerable; But what, unleſs a miracle can help him, that is *Both* He is quite excluded, not only from the *Advantages*, but the *Comforts* of Society; uncapable of any thing that might *Divert* the ſadneſs of his Thoughts, or *mitigate* his Trouble He lives at moſt but the loweſt ſort of *Animal* Life, but one degree a-

bove

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bove the *Vegetative*, ſave that He can *think*, and *reflect* upon his *Miſery*, (and that with great *Confuſion* too, and which will *Aggravate* it much) and Pray to God by *Death* to take Him from it; the Hopes of which Deliverance in Time, is all the Comfort that he hath. He is indeed *Seal'd* up to the moſt diſmal Condition that can be imagin'd in this World; expos'd inevitably (as to any of his own help) to the *Dangers* of it, *uneapable* of its *Comforts* and Enjoyments, and had abundantly better be out of it, than thus bury'd alive as 'twere in it.

Like this, tho' Infinitely *worſe*, as we ſhall ſee preſently, is the Condition of the *Spiritully* Blind and Deaf, as before deſcribed; and tho' I never *knew*, or upon enquiry could *Hear* of any *Naturally* ſo, (which as often as I think on, I can't but admire God's Wonderful good Providence and care of Mankind, in ſuffering ſo very *few*, if *any*, to be ſo *extreamly* miſerable; when yet, the one

one Senſe is as ſoon loſt as the other, and he that to-Day loſt his Sight, might the next Day loſe his Hearing, as well as one Man *this*, and another *that*, and when one and the ſame Accident or Diſtemper might eaſily deprive of both at *once*;) tho' I never knew, as I ſaid, or could hear of any *Naturally* both Deaf and Blind, yet *Spiritually* there are, God knows, abundance. But 'tis their own Act and Deed, God's care being equal to Preſerve Men from being ſo in the one Senſe, as well as the other.

Now the *extream Miſery* of the Spiritually Deaf and Blind, (or in other words the Obſtinate and Irreclaimable) conſiſts in the following Particulars.

Firſt, As the Naturally ſo are in Effect out of the World, and Dead while they Live; ſo *theſe* are out of the *Church*, receive no Benefit by the Communion of Saints; have none of the Comforts and Advantages

tages of that Holy Society; no Commerce with, nor influences from the Divine Head of it Chriſt Jeſus; have the *Name* of Chriſtians, and that's all, but live like Infidels in the Darkneſs of their Mind, and the Vileneſs of their Practice, as if there were no God, no Religion, no *future* State, or no Account then to be given of our Actions in *this*.

And what ſad circumſtances muſt thoſe needs be in, who thus deprive themſelves of all the *means of Grace* and Salvation in *this* World, and of all *Hopes* of Happineſs in the *next!*

For, Secondly, thoſe that are in this Condition are expos'd to Ruin ſo far as we can ſee, *unavoidably*.

A Charitable *Friend* may preſerve a Man *Naturally* Blind and Deaf from approaching Dangers, and ſnatch him from imminent Perils, which He knows nothing of himſelf, nor can receive Information of from others,

thers, much leſs tell how to avoid; but who can do this for one that is *Spiritually* ſo? *Man* cannot; and to expect that *God* ſhould, is groundleſs Preſumption.

He that has ſtop'd his Ears, and ſhut faſt his Eyes, and that for this very *Reaſon*, leſt He ſhould hear and ſee, be inform'd of his Duty, and made ſenſible of his Errors, and inclin'd to Reform 'em; how can *this* Man of all Men, expect that God ſhould make him Hear and See, and Convert and Save him whether He *will or no*?

As our Lord ſaid to the willfully Blind *Phariſees*, (and the caſe is the ſame with the *Deaf*) *if ye were Blind indeed, ye ſhould have no Sin, but now ye ſay, we ſee*, and yet ſee not, (as 'tis elſewhere laid to their charge) *therefore your ſin remaineth*, John 9. 41.

The Blindneſs of our Underſtandings which is not *wilfull*, and the defects of our Obedience conſequent upon

upon it, God will paſs by; and afford us, if not a *perfect* Light, yet ſuch as ſhall be ſufficient to guide us, if we will follow it, into the ways of Peace. But He that *can* ſee, and *will* not, or He that *once* could ſee, but has willfully put out his Eyes, or keeps them faſt ſhut and clos'd on purpoſe that He may not ſee his Duty, becauſe He has no mind to do it; God has no where ſaid that He will *force* open his Eyelids, or reſtore him his Sight by *Miracle*, and convince and reform Him *irreſiſtibly*; but rather, and 'tis but juſt, that *the Blackneſs of Darkneſs is reſerved for him for ever.*

St. Jude.

Thirdly, to be thus Spiritually Blind and Deaf, is a Condition extreamly Deplorable, becauſe it admits of no *Comfort* or *Conſolation*; the Man has made himſelf not *capable* of receiving it from *others*, nor can his *own* Thoughts ſuggeſt any thing but what will make him ſtill *more Miſerable.*

For

For *Conſcience*, do what we can, will ſometimes be *awake*, and when it is ſo, its clamours and upbraidings are ſo importune and loud, that they *will* be heard, and its Convictions are written upon the very *Mind it ſelf*. Like ſo many flaſhes of *Lightning*, they at once Diſpel the *Darkneſs* of the Soul, and ſhew it its Condition, and by intollerable *ſcorchings* begin Hell upon Earth; as the Regions of the Damned have no other Light, than is caus'd by the flames that torment them. A Light that will *convince* indeed, but not *Convert*, and only ſerve to cauſe a quicker Senſe of the Horror of that diſmal State they're in.

No Man can expreſs, what Agonies obſtinate irreclaimable Sinners ſometimes feel; what dire forebodeings of *the Wrath to come*! Which tho' they endeavour never ſo induſtriouſly to ſtifle, will yet revive again, to their unſpeakable, *unallay'd*, Terror and Confuſion.

The *Naturally* Deaf and Blind, if their *Conſcience* be quiet, may think upon *God*, and *Pray* to Him, and receive *Comfort* from Him, and hope that *tho' heavineſs may endure for this* diſconſolate dark *Night*, yet the *Morning*, the Dawning of Eternal *Day* will bring *Light*, and *Joy, and Healing under its wings*; and their ſad *lonely* ſilence be exchang'd for the raviſhing Sounds of Heavenly Halleluja's, and the bleſt Society of the Spirits of Juſt Men made Perfect; till the long wiſh'd for Time, when the Happy *Euge, well done Good and faithful Servant*, ſhall fix them for ever in the Joy of their Lord.

But to the *Spiritually* ſo, to think upon *God* is to begin their *Hell*, for to ſuch He is a *conſuming Fire*; and to think upon *Death*, is to open to themſelves a horrid Proſpect of the Torments they ſhall for ever Suffer after it. Death indeed, will open their Eyes and their Ears, (and the Thoughts of it too, will do it in ſome

ſome meaſure) but to ſuch *Objects*, as they had better never have been born, than e're acquainted with.

Thus does our Lord moſt feelingly Repreſent to us the miſerable Condition of an obſtinate Sinner, by the greateſt Misfortune that can befal us upon Earth. And now, if this be ſo, how nearly does it Concern us every one, with the greateſt Care and Diligence to prevent this growing Calamity, which is ſo apt to ſteal upon us without our Obſervation!

The Pleaſures and Proſperities of the World, eſpecially in the days of Youth and vigour, ſeem to bid fair for Happineſs; and we are apt to be ſo mightily delighted with 'em, as to Drink *deep* of 'em and *often*, till at length we grow *inſenſible* of *Spiritual* things, and then comes on that *Blindneſs* and *Deafneſs* to Religion which we have now diſcours'd of; and what is the ſad Conſequence we have juſt now ſeen.

The greater therefore our *Danger* is in this matter, the greater in all Reaſon ſhould be our Care to *prevent* it; and ſince all proceeds from too much love of the World, therefore in the firſt place to reſolve to love that *leſs*; and begin in Time to work our Hearts into a *Pliant*, *Ductile* Temper, ſuch as may keep our Ears open to fair Warnings, charitable Reproofs, and good Advice. And then, if we look upon the *uneaſineſs* we feel at ſuch Diſcourſes as an *ill Symptom*, and make it an Argument for our ſtill greater attention to them; and ſo far embrace every Conviction of our Conſciences, as to let it *continue* with us and beſtow ſome *Thoughts* upon it; if we do this, and do it *Sincerely*, and in *Time*, we ſhall find the Cloud begin to remove from our Underſtandings, and Spiritual *Light* and *Knowledge* will flow in apace; we ſhall plainly diſcover the Cheats that were before put upon us, the fatal Miſtakes we were under; and this

this will *unſtop our Ears*, and make us ſtill more and more Attentive to the *Words of ſound Wiſdom*, the faithful Counſels of thoſe that wiſh our Happineſs; and that will make our Hearts ſtill more and more Tender and *Impreſſible*, ſenſible of our true Intereſt, our Duty, and our Danger, which will excite our utmoſt Diligence to *ſecure* the *one*, and *avoid* the *other*, crying unto God for help; who never Rejects that Prayer which begs his Aſſiſtance, that we may ſerve him better, and to which we add our own Sincere Endeavours.

Now who that's *Blind* or *Deaf*, or but in *Danger* of being ſo, would refuſe an eaſie certain Cure? And when He knows how much he may contribute to it *himſelf*, d'ye think He would delay to do his *utmoſt* towards it? And how overjoy'd would the *Blind* be, to be ſenſible of the *fainteſt Glimmerings*, and open wide his be-nighted Eyes, to let in more and more of chearful Light!

How Raviſhing would the leaſt *Sound* be to the *Deaf* Ear, and excite its utmoſt Attention to receive ſtill more! And how much greater would be the Joy, of the *both Deaf and Blind*, to recover either Senſe ſo far, as to have tho' but the leaſt Intimation, that there was ſome Hopes of their enjoying both again; that it lay very much in their own Power to effect it, and that the blame muſt be their own if they did not!

How *eagerly* would they do every thing they could, to make a free entrance for Light and Sounds, and welcome every new Acceſſion of either with Tranſports of Delight! How earneſt their Prayers to God for his Bleſſing, and how unfeigned their Thanks and Praiſes for Succeſs! What a quick Grateful Reliſh would they have of the almoſt forgotten *Pleaſures* of the Eye and Ear, and how would they *Improve* the *Advantages* of both! How feelingly ſenſible would they be of their

their former Miſerable State; and how would they dread and avoid every thing, tho' never ſo remote, that might lead to it again!

If we may ſuppoſe all this of the *Naturally* Blind and Deaf, how much more ſhould it be verified by the *Spiritually* ſo, whoſe caſe as we have ſeen is infinitely more deplorable, and whoſe Deſires therefore of recovery in all Reaſon ſhould be ſtronger far, their Prayers more Importunate, their Joy greater in the Hopes of it, and their endeavours more earneſt to bring it to Perfection! And He that is ſo ſtubborn and obſtinate, as wilfully to *continue* in this ſad ſtate, into which too he has brought *Himſelf*; where ſhould the blame of his Ruin be plac'd but *upon Himſelf?*

Let every Sinner therefore, inſtead of impiouſly and ungratefully accuſing *God* of Tyranny and Injuſtice, Arbitrary Power, and mercileſs *Decrees*, and the like; as if He firſt

hardned their Hearts and took away their Hearing and their Sight, and ſo ſealed them up to Deſtruction, and then reſolv'd to inflict Eternal Puniſhments upon them, becauſe they did not do *Impoſſibilities*; hear and ſee, when He had made them Deaf and Blind, and have a tender Senſe of Religion, when He had made their Hearts callous and paſt feeling: Inſtead of ſuch horrid Blaſphemy as this, let every Sinner give Glory to God, by humbly acknowledging that 'tis his *own* doing, and the Conſequence of his liſtning to the *Deſtroyer*, rather than the *Saviour* of Mankind. Whoever periſhes, I ſay it again, muſt blame *himſelf* for it; for 'tis his own wilful Blindneſs, Stubborneſs and Obſtinacy, that has depriv'd him of the means and poſſibilities of Salvation. To ſave ſuch a one, God muſt proceed quite contrary to the Nature of Virtue and Vice, and the eſtabliſh'd Rules of his Word, and *force* him to be Good and Happy, notwithſtanding all his *Reſiſtances* and Refuſals. But a *forc'd Virtue*,

Virtue, and a *forc'd Heaven*, are ſtrange new things that one ſhall ſeldom hear of.

When a Sinner is arriv'd to that degree of Obſtinacy, that nothing but *extraordinary*, nay *miraculous* Grace, can ſoften and Reform him, God's not giving him that *extraordinary* Grace, but leaving him to the *uſual conſtant* Aſſiſtances of his Holy Spirit, and Methods of the Goſpel, which his Obſtinacy has made *Ineffectual* to him; (for what Inſtructions and Advices can take Place upon the Deaf and Blind?) this ſeems to be the moſt Intelligible Account of God's *hardning* any Man. 'Tis only Permitting him ſtill more and more to harden *Himſelf*, by not uſing *extraordinary* Means to Prevent it; and which is but a Juſt Puniſhment for his former *Stubborneſs*.

As in the Story of *Pharaoh*, He hardened his *own* Heart ſo far, as to receive no Impreſſion either by God's *Severity* in inflicting, or his *Goodneſs*

Goodneſs in Removing *Seven* of the *Ten* Plagues; and then *God* is ſaid to harden his Heart, or to give him up to his own Fatal *Obſtinacy*. So in *Iſaiah, chap.* 6. 9, 10. *ver.* where God commands the Prophet to Denounce to his Rebellious People, the Judgment of making their *Hearts fat, and their Ears heavy*, &c. which our Lord ſaid was fulfill'd in the *Phariſees, Mat.* 13. 14, 15. The Reaſon of this Threatning is, becauſe they had made *themſelves Deaf and Blind* before: *Ye Hear indeed, but Underſtand not*, or do not attend and Conſider; *and ye See indeed, but do not Perceive*, or take Notice; *therefore*, as by way of *Puniſhment*, *make this Peoples Heart fat, and their Ears heavy, and ſhut their Eyes*, &c.

Wherefore, to Conclude this Advice; the way for us not to Periſh, is not to Deſtroy our *ſelves* by our incorrigible *Obſtinacy:* and He that does not make *himſelf* Blind and Deaf, and inſenſible to Religion, need never fear that *God* will make him ſo; whoſe

whoſe Solemn *Proteſtation* is, that He *deſires not the Death of a Sinner*, and whoſe conſtant *Call* is, *Turn ye, Turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye dye, O Houſe of Iſrael!*

The Thirteenth Advice.

AND now, having ſeen the Danger of Obſtinate *continuing* in ſuch ill Courſes as Young Perſons may have faln into; the next Advice will be, that they endeavour to Recover themſelves by a ſincere and ſpeedy *Repentance.* Advice 13.

And here, to prevent Miſtakes in this matter, which are very often made, and of very fatal Conſequence; 'twill be needful briefly to ſhew what true Repentance is. 'Tis ſuch a Senſe of Sin as fills the Soul with *Shame* and bitter *Remorſe* for having Committed it, utterly condemning

demning it, as the greateſt Baſeneſs, Ingratitude, and Folly; Reſolving for the Future no more to be Guilty of it, and keeping that Reſolution to the beſt of our Power. Or in other Words, 'tis a Mans *willing Amendment* of his former Faults, proceeding from a thorough Change of his *Judgment* concerning them; attended with great Sorrow and compunction of Spirit, for his acting ſo contrary to His own Reaſon and beſt Intereſt, and violating the Juſt Commands of God, whoſe innumerable Benefactions to Him, make his utmoſt Services but a Juſt Debt.

Now from this Deſcription of Repentance, we may take Notice that 'tis not every Religious *fright*, occaſion'd either by ſome awakening Diſcourſes of the Dreadful Puniſhments that will overtake a Sinner in the other World, back'd with the Terrors of his own guilty Conſcience, or by a fit of Sickneſs, when the near Approaches of Death open His Eyes, and give him a Sight of thoſe Torments,

ments, and never dying Flames, which He is like to ſuffer, and ſeem to be juſt ready to take hold of Him: Much leſs is it a few forc'd Sighs and Tears, *a Lord have mercy upon us*, and a heedleſs unaffectionate Repetition of ſome Penitential Forms, the Senſe of which we do regard but little. Notwithſtanding all this, a Man may retain the ſame Affection to Sin, and be as Bad again as ever; and ſuch ſort of Penitents, always are ſo, and very often Worſe. This ſort of Sorrow for Sin, is like that of a Traytor at the Gallows; He Repents him, it may be, that He was engag'd in ſuch and ſuch Practices, becauſe they brought Him thither, and the Time of his Execution is come; but at the ſame time He is as much an Enemy to his Prince as ever, and would gladly Repeat his Treaſon, could He do it with Impunity.

Let every one therefore have a Care of taking any thing of this Nature for Repentance. The greateſt

eſt and moſt pungent remorſe for Sin, unleſs 'tis follow'd by a thorough amendment of Life, is nothing but what we call trouble of Mind, and the laſhes of Conſcience; which tho' they are apt to put Men upon making ſerious Reflections upon their ill Courſes, and by Degrees may bring them to a true ſenſe of the *Wickedneſs* of their Sin, which is a good ſtep towards Repentance, yet 'tis but a *Step*: And a great deal more muſt be done by him that will repent indeed. His Mind and Judgment muſt be intirely chang'd, his Temper and Diſpoſition alter'd; ill habits muſt be rooted out, and the contrary good ones Eſtabliſhed in their Room: And his ſorrow for Sin, which at firſt was for his *own* ſake, and for fear he ſhould ſuffer what God had threatned to inflict; muſt be improv'd into a true *godly ſorrow*, ſuch as reſpects that infinitely good Being who he ſo ungratefully rebell'd againſt; and melts him down into all the paſſions of *Shame* and *Confuſion*, and ſelf *Abhorrence* and *Condemnation*, which

which attend a deep ſenſe of doing baſely by one who is infinitely kind and good to us. 'Tis *this* alone that will *work Repentance to Salvation, not to be repented of,* (i. e.) a conſtant *Better Life.* 2 Cor. 7. 10.

Now from this ſhort Account of the Nature of true Repentance, we may ſee plainly, that 'tis a Work which muſt be ſet about *Immediately,* if we would bring it to Perfection. 'Tis as Difficult as Neceſſary, and requires very great Reſolution, Watchfulneſs and Diligence to carry it on ſuccesfully; and is indeed, the proper buſineſs of *Youth. Agree* therefore *with thine Adverſary quickly,* as our Lord adviſeth, and with all the ſpeed imaginable ſet about that great Work, without which our Ruine will be inevitable. Mat. 5. 25.

And that young Perſons may be the more effectually Perſwaded to ſo ungrateful a Task, ſo Melancholly an Employment; they may

pleaſe

pleaſe to attend to the following Conſiderations.

Firſt, Every deferring this great Duty to ſome other time, is a reſolv'd Continuance in a ſtate which we know God infinitely hates, and a new ſtep to final Impenitency.

No Mans Conſcience is ſear'd and benum'd in an inſtant; there muſt be frequent Acts of Violence done to it to ſilence its Clamours, and make it ſtupid and inſenſible. Now every time we *put off* our Repentance, we renew that *Violence*; our Conſcience has leſs and leſs of feeling; ſin grows more and more habitual, and therefore ſeems to ſit lighter and eaſier upon us; and that makes us ſtill more Confident and Careleſs, and ſo we go ſmoothly on in the way of Ruine, till we become *paſt feeling*, as the Apoſtle Phraſes it, and then paſt *Cure*.

Epheſ. 4. 19.

Thus the Sinner, if let alone, will certainly in the end become his own Execu-

Executioner. Every Permiſſion of Sin to abide with us without Diſturbance, has it's Proportion of the Guilt and Miſery of that hardned State, which St. *Auſtin* thought was the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. And the longer 'tis Permitted, the greater is that Guilt, and 'twill inſenſibly grow into a *Reprobate* Mind; Rom. 1. 28. and then, without Remedy, will follow the intollerable Puniſhment. And therefore, unleſs we can *dwell with Everlaſting Burnings*, it nearly concerns us, without further delays, to deſtroy Sin in its Embryo, and very firſt Beginning, leſt before we think on't it arrive to this fatal Perfection, and bring forth this Death.

But *Secondly*, tho' by God's ſpecial Care and Aſſiſtance, a Sinner *may* be awaken'd before he comes to this ſad Period (which yet, becauſe no Man can be ſure of 'tis a very great Madneſs to truſt to) yet the longer we delay our Repentance, the difficulty of it will Proportionably increaſe upon us.

When length of time has made Sin habitual to a Man, and it becomes fix'd and rooted in his Nature; it muſt needs be a very hard task to deſtroy thoſe inveterate ingrain'd Habits, and pluck up thoſe ſpreading Roots of Bitterneſs, which have ſo long over-run, and taken Poſſeſſion of the Soul. The Prophet *Jeremy* ſays, 'tis as eaſie for *an Ethiopion to change his skin, and a Leopard his ſpots, as for thoſe to do good that are accuſtomed to do evil*; which ſignifies at leaſt that 'tis the greateſt *Difficulty*, and requires an almoſt endleſs labour to perform.

Jer. 13. 23.

Now what ſtrange folly is it, to ſuffer ſo fatal and ſpreading a Diſeaſe as Sin, to go on for many Years without controul, when even now at *firſt* 'tis hardly to be cur'd, and will give us a full Employment to keep under even to the laſt of our Days, tho' we take it in time, and begin with it immediately!

Be-

Beſides, as much as Youth is apt to depend upon the future, and ſtill defer till *to Morrow*; how uncertain is it whether to morrow will be *Theirs!* We can only be ſure of the *Preſent* Moment, ten thouſand Accidents may deprive us of the *Next*; Accidents as unforeſeen and unprovided for, as are the Miſeries of humane Life to an unborn Infant. Now what extream Madneſs is it for Creatures in ſuch precarious Circumſtances, to ſlumber and drouſe away their Opportunity; and defer a Buſineſs of ſuch infinite Conſequence, when none but God can tell what the next Hour may bring forth!

But *Thirdly*, of all times the time of *Sickneſs* and approach of Death is the moſt Improper and Unſeaſonable for this great Work of Repentance.

For *Firſt*, 'Tis then more *Difficult* than at any time before; our evil

Habits, are then more deeply Rooted Sin more Predominant than ever by reaſon of long Poſſeſſion; and God more than ever diſpleas'd, and his Spirit more than ever griev'd, and nearer being quench'd by thoſe often repeated Delays, which the Sinner has then ſpun to their utmoſt length. Now in other matters, we think it a very odd Contrivance, for a Man that has a great Work to do, to neglect all *Favourable* Opportunities, and pitch upon a time, which of all others will lay the moſt and greateſt Hardſhips in his way; and why ſhould it not be at leaſt *as* unreaſonable in this Caſe of Repentance?

No Work I'm ſure can be of greater Importance than this is, nor are any Difficulties more Preſſing than thoſe a true Penitent muſt overcome; and therefore, to defer it till a time when 'twill be more difficult than ever, and our Ability to ſtrive againſt that Difficulty leſs than ever, (as we ſhall ſee preſently) is

is certainly the greateſt Madneſs in the World.

Secondly, Beſides, the Devil is then more than ever buſie to ſecure a Sinner to himſelf; makes uſe of all his Wiles and Cunning, either wholly to prevent his Repentance, or make it ineffectual as knowing Men are then leſs than ever able to Diſcover and Reſiſt 'em.

If the Sinner be of a *chearful* Temper, apt to believe the *beſt* of his Condition, (which is the Caſe of the generality of Men) he cloſes with him preſently, and endeavours to work him up to *Careleſneſs* and *Preſumption*. Repreſents to his mind a diſplay of the great *Goodneſs* of God, his *Tenderneſs* over Mankind, that his *Mercy is above all his Works*, and Triumphs over his Juſtice, and is always ready to forget and to forgive; but carefully diverts all Thoughts of what we are to perform firſt, that we may be capable of this Mercy. If the Man's Conſcience

ſhould ſometimes be awake, and tell him the Truth in this Matter, that Repentance muſt go before Pardon, and that this is a very difficult Work, eſpecially upon a Bed of Languiſhing; He preſently lulls him aſleep again, by inſinuating, that were there not a Saviour, things would be bad indeed; but Chriſt has ſuffer'd for Sinners, and wholly ſatisfy'd God's Wrath, His Righteouſneſs was Perfect and Redundant and ſhall be *Imputed* to 'em, if they'l intirely *Roll* themſelves upon Him, and being Cloathed with his Merits they need not fear acceptance. Miſapplying the Words of St. *Paul*, that *a Man is juſtified by Faith, without the deeds of the Law*; and concealing thoſe of St. *James*, what *doth it profit a Man to ſay he has faith if he have not works, can faith ſave him*? For *faith without works is dead, being alone*: And thoſe of our Saviour too, *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I ſay*? *And, Unleſs ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh.* And as for the Terrors of God's *Vengeance*, 'tis true, He will indeed

Rom. 3. 28.

2 Jam. 14. 17.

Luk. 6. 46. 13. 3.

indeed inflict them, but 'tis upon the *Reprobate*, whom He has from all Eternity Predeſtin'd to Deſtruction; but the *Elect* are not at all Concerned in them, and that He is one of that Happy Number, His groundleſs Confidence, and the Numbneſs of his Conſcience, ſhall be made an Argument.

Thus will this wicked Spirit, by cunningly blending things Falſe and True together, drill a ſick Man on in this pleaſant Slumber, and lengthen out this unhappy Dream, till his Opportunity, is gone and his Oyl ſpent, and in the midſt of his Aſſurances He becomes a Prey to the Prince of Darkneſs, who will carry him in Triumph to the place of his Miſerable Abode.

And as to this ſort of Men He thus appears like *an Angel of Light*, all Smiles, and Sweetneſs, and Comfort; ſo to thoſe of a more *Melancholly*, *diffident* Temper, He ſhews himſelf as He *is*, with all his Horrors and his Flames

about him. He continually fills their Minds with dreadful Ideas of the Inexorable *Juſtice*, and *Severity* of God, of the Impoſſibility of pleaſing him, of their being *Reprobated* by him; and repreſents to them their Sins in their full numbers, and worſt aſpect, and heightned with all imaginable Aggravations. And it may be, terrifies them with Helliſh Dreams, fills their Fancy with ſtrange Scenes of Horror; and lets 'em know how ready he is to ſeize their guilty Souls, as ſoon as ever parted from their Bodies; till he finally makes 'em, what he would have them be, quite *Deſperate*.

If by theſe means he finds, that he can't wholly *Prevent* the Repentance of a ſinner, (which yet a miſerable Experience tells us he too often does) yet it ſhall go hard, but he will hinder its being throughly *Effectual*. And to this end, he one while [diſtracts the Sick Man's Mind with endleſs *Scruples* and Difficulties concerning it; not ſuch as will at all Con-

Conduce to Promote and further it you may be ſure, but ſuch as are fruitleſs and unneceſſary, and of endleſs Controverſie, ſuch as will Amuſe and Confound him, and waſte much Time, and keep him wavering and in Suſpenſe, and negligent of what is indeed *Repentance to Salvation.*

Sometimes he interrupts his Serious Thoughts by thruſting in Affairs of the World, unſeaſonably and impertinently; and often ſo Troubles and *Perplexes* thoſe things which 'tis neceſſary for him to take *ſome* Thought about, that they become greater hinderances, to the *one thing needful*, than one would imagine.

When the Sick Man *Prays*, He will cool the fervour, and break the Intenſeneſs of his Devotion, by throwing into his Mind trifling and it may be Prophane Fancies; when he ſhould *Communicate*, he Tempts him to defer it under pretence of being unprepared, and unworthy to partake of thoſe Holy Myſteries. Such Sins as he

he ought moſt of all to be afflicted for, he will help him to Palliate and Excuſe; and if they cry too loud not to be heard, he'l endeavour to contract and leſſen the Meaſures of Repentance: And ſome Deviliſh Device or other he has ready upon all occaſions, to make a Dying Man's Penitence imperfect and unavailing.

Now, tho' this great Deceiver is ready, thro' the whole Courſe of our Lives, thus to Circumvent and Cheat us of our Happineſs; yet is he more than ordinary Induſtrious to ſecure a Sinner when leaving the World, and upon the Brink of Eternity; for *then*, if he has him not, he muſt for ever loſe him. And the circumſtances of a Dying Condition give him great Advantages over a Poor Languiſhing, Amaz'd, Diſpirited, Affrighted Creature, and 'tis but too too often that he is Succeſsful againſt thoſe that madly *while* their Repentance off till then.

For *Thirdly*, The inſeparable Attendants upon a *Death Bed* are ſuch, as if there

there were no ſuch *Adverſary* to deal with, would render it a very unapt ſeaſon for ſo great a Work as this.

Our Powers and Faculties both of Soul and Body, are then generally mightily Diſorder'd and very little Serviceable; our Apprehenſion dull'd, our Underſtanding and Judgment, and Memory, weakned and Impair'd; our Minds Diſtracted by fears and uncertainties, and our Bodies Languiſhing, full of Pains and great Diſcompoſures. Some Diſeaſes make the Patient ſtupid, and utterly Inapprehenſive; others heat Him into Frenzy and Diſtraction; and ſome keep Him continually upon the *Rack*, and will not ſuffer him to attend to any thing but his preſent Miſery: And even the moſt *favourable* have enough in 'em, mightily to hinder our Progreſs in this great Duty, for which a whole Life of Youth and Health, and perfect ſoundneſs of Mind and Body will not be too much. No wonder therefore, if the weakneſſes and Infirmities of Sickneſs, and the Approach

of

of Death, which make a Man ſcarce capable of ſettling his worldly Affairs, ſhould be a very unfit Time for him to begin to make his Peace with God, and Prepare himſelf for Eternity.

But in the laſt place, Let us ſuppoſe all that can be deſir'd in ſuch a Caſe as this; that the Diſtemper is not ſo Violent, but that it leaves a Man the free uſe of his Reaſon and all his Faculties, and the decays of his Body are gradual, and without exceſſive Pains; and Death comes on by eaſie gentle ſteps: 'Twould yet be a very great Folly to put off Repentance ev'n to ſuch a Death Bed as *this*, becauſe 'tis ſo hard a Matter to have any tolerable Aſſurance that the utmoſt we can then do, is Hearty and Sincere, and will be to any purpoſe.

'Tis the *Fruits* of Repentance that Prove the ſincerity of it; and Sorrow and Regret for paſt ſins, and wiſhes that we had never committed them, and the like, how pungent, and how earneſt ſoever they may be, are not Re-

Repentance, but only a ſtep in order to it. For Repentance, as was ſaid, is a thorough Change of a ſinner's *Mind* and *Life*; which, whether ſuch Sorrow will really effect or not, nothing but Time can ſhew. And therefore, the Man that Repents not till his Time is juſt Expiring, that has no Temptation to his former Vices, nor Ability to Commit them if he had, muſt needs be very uncertain whether He indeed *Repents*, or is only ſcar'd and frighted with the near Proſpect of the endleſs Miſeries that attend a ſinner after Death. That it is too often, thus with dying Penitents, their returning to their Vices when God has Reſtor'd to them their Health, is Proof ſufficient; and whether it is not ſo in any particular Man's Caſe, no one can ſay, unleſs he Lives to make the Tryal.

Now what a Comfortleſs, diſheartning thing is it, for a Man to Breath out his Soul in ſuch great uncertainties! How miſerably anxious muſt his Breaſt needs be, about the ſafety of

of his Condition and his Acceptance with God, which yet he can have no Aſſurance of, till his Condition is fix'd and become unalterable!

The only Remedy is to Repent *Immediately*; that we may have time to approve the *Sincerity* of our Repentance, and enjoy the unſpeakable Comforts both in Life and Death, that will attend our being at Peace and Reconcil'd to God.

Wherefore, as the Wiſe *Ben Sirach* excellently adviſeth, *make no tarrying to turn unto the Lord, aud put not off from day to day, for ſuddenly ſhall the wrath of God come forth, and in thy ſecurity thou ſhalt be deſtroyed, and periſh in the day of vengeance.*

Eccl. 5. 7.

The Laſt Advice.

Laſt Advice.

AND now for a Concluſion of all; Let me Adviſe Young Perſons, when by God's Aſſiſtance they are

are become ſo Senſible of their Miſcarriages, as ſincerely to Repent of them, and reſolve to *Reform*: Let me then Adviſe them to *ſeal* and ratifie thoſe Pious Reſolutions, with a Devout Reception of the Holy Communion, and Confirm, and *ſtrengthen* them ſtill more and more, and bring 'em to Perfection, by a *frequent* attendance at the Table of our Lord.

The Sacrament of our Lords Supper, as 'tis one of the great *Myſteries* of our Holy Religion, and therefore requires of us the profoundeſt *Awe* and Reverence, and Religious *Fear*; ſo is it a Treaſury of *Bleſſings* alſo, a Channel flowing with Divine Grace and Bounty, and therefore calls for the higheſt Degrees, and expreſſions of *Deſire* and *Love*.

'Tis like the Pillar of a Cloud and of Fire, that accompanied the People of God in the Wilderneſs; Dark and Myſterious indeed on one ſide, and apt to Imprint a Holy Dread upon our Spirits: But on the Reverſe there

there is *Light* and *Heat* to inflame our Love, and enkindle our Devotion, to enlighten our Underſtandings and direct our Wills, to purifie and refine us, and render us *an Offering of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour, acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt.*

And thus was it eſteem'd by the Holy Men of the *Firſt* Ages of Chriſtianity; when the Fires of Devotion burnt bright, and the Church was Acted by the Spirit of Love and Purity. Many excellent Things were then ſpoken of this Myſtery, and great was the *Reverence* that was given to it; but then their *Love* to it likewiſe was very great, their deſires of it ardent, and frequent and conſtant was their Reception of it. They call'd it a *Myſtery*, and as ſuch they rever'd it; they call'd it too, a *Feaſt* of Thankfulneſs and Love, and as ſuch they rejoyced in it, and thirſted after it. And the Effect of this was Exemplary Piety and Holineſs of Life, and ſteady Profeſſion of the Faith of Jeſus, even to the Death.

After-

Afterwards, when *the Love of many did wax cold*, this Sacred Duty grew more and more neglected, two or three times a Year was thought ſufficient to Communicate, and ſometimes *once* would ſerve the turn, and ſo 'tis ſtill with *moſt* amongſt our ſelves; and the Wickedneſs, Ignorance, and Stupidity of the *middle* Ages, and the open Prophanneſs and ſcandalous Debauchery of theſe laſt Times, are the miſerable Conſequences of ſo great an Impiety.

And indeed, no wonder if the Diſeaſe get head, when Men omit to apply the Remedy. The Holy Jeſus, that great Phyſician of the Soul, who beſts knows its Diſtempers, and the Methods of their Cure, left *this* as his Dying Secret, to be obſerv'd by all Ages of the World, for the Recovery and Confirmation of their Spiritual Health. Now if after all this Care and

Kindneſs, and excellent Proviſion on *His* part, we ſlight his Directions, reject his Medicines, and refuſe Life when 'tis ſo Charitably offer'd us, and upon ſuch *eaſie* terms; we may thank our ſelves if we are, as we deſerve to be, Diſeas'd and Miſerable.

I hope we are Senſible, that without God's Grace and Divine Aſſiſtance, we can do nothing that is Good; which Grace being His free Gift, 'tis neceſſary that we make uſe of thoſe Means, and obſerve thoſe Times and Seaſons which he hath made choice of, in order to our Receiving that his Charity and Bounty. Now the Chief of theſe, is the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; by which, *we are made one with Chriſt, and Chriſt with us, and he dwelleth in us, and we in him*, as our Church expreſſes it in the Exhortation at the time of the Celebration.

That

That is, 'tis the great Conveyance of every thing that is needful to the *Strengthning and Refreſhing* the Soul of a Chriſtian, and making him run with chearfulneſs the Race that is ſet before him.

This then being the great Diſpenſatory of the Riches of God's Goodneſs, hither muſt we come if we would be Partakers of it; and wilfully to *Abſent* our ſelves, is ſo great a *Slight* both of the Dying Inſtitution of our Saviour, and the Bleſſings that will attend the due obſervance of it, as is utterly inexcuſable, and will be of very Melancholly conſequence.

But I ſhall not Proceed further upon this Particular, either in giving an Account of the Nature of this great Duty, or the Manner of Performing it, and the Preparation requiſite in order to it; there being ſo many excellent Books already written upon this Subject.

Only give me leave to make one Obſervation or two, in Anſwer to the uſual Plea for Mens neglect of this Holy Sacrament, *viz.* That they are *unfit* for, and *unworthy* of it; and fear therefore, that if they do Receive it, they ſhall Receive it *unworthily*, and *eat and drink their own damnation.*

For the true meaning of which Words, See Archbiſhop Tillotſon's Seventh Sermon, Volume the third, Printed before his Death.

As for the latter part of this Plea, it proceeds from a great Miſtake, namely, the confounding theſe two very different things, *being unworthy to Receive*, and *Receiving unworthily*: And which, when rectified, the thing will ſtand in a clear light.

'Tis True, every Man as a Sinner, is *unworthy*, not only of ſo great a Favour as the Sacrament at the hands of God, but of every breath of Air he breaths, of every Crumb of Bread he eats, in ſhort, of every the leaſt Bleſſing he enjoys; and 'tis very fit he ſhould be

be intimately ſenſible of this his *Unworthineſs*; but yet for all this, he that uſes any of theſe Bleſſings ſoberly, and gives God thanks, may very *Worthily* partake of and enjoy them.

So here, in this Caſe of the Sacrament, the beſt Man living can't ſay he is *Worthy* to Receive it, but yet may nevertheleſs Receive it *Worthily*, or in a manner becoming ſo ſacred a Duty. Nay, the more deeply ſenſible he is, of his not being *Worthy* to Receive, the more *Worthily*, no doubt, he will Receive it. And 'tis he that Receives *Unworthily*, not he that is *Unworthy* to Receive, that incurs the Guilt and the Puniſhment which the Apoſtle mentions, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29.

As for Mens being *unfit* to Receive, or unprepared; (not to take Notice of the *oddneſs* of the Excuſe, which is in effect the ſame, as to make careleſneſs and idleneſs a

Plea for Diſobedience;) I only deſire, they would ask themſelves upon what terms they hope to go to Heaven? If they know any thing of Chriſtianity, they muſt anſwer thus; *I hope to arrive at that happy place, thro' the Merits of Jeſus my Saviour, upon Condition of my own true Faith and ſincere Repentance.*

Now if this be thus abſolutely neceſſary to our Salvation, we muſt either quit our Hopes of being ſav'd, or elſe ſincerely *Believe* and *Repent*; that is, have ſuch a Faith as purifies the heart, and works by love, and reſembles us to Jeſus, and makes us partakers of a Divine Nature; and ſo Repent as thoroughly to amend, and reform our lives, and entirely to turn from Sin to God.

This we ſee is indiſpenſibly requir'd of us in order to our future happineſs; and was ſo before the

the Sacrament was Inſtituted, and would have been ſo, had it never been Inſtituted at all.

Now, that which is ſo neceſſary, as on our part, to bring us to *Heaven*, is the very Preparation that is requiſite, to fit us for the *Sacrament*; the Qualifications for both are exactly the ſame. And therefore, he that hopes to be *Saved*, *muſt* ſo Believe and Live, as to be fit to Receive the *Sacrament*; (unleſs we'll ſay, that more is requir'd to our Receiving the Sacrament Worthily than to Eternal Salvation) and he that makes his *Unfitneſs* the Excuſe of his neglect of it, either knows not what he ſays, or elſe muſt know that he muſt cure that Fault, or be for ever miſerable.

A Good Life, as we all muſt own, if we believe the Scriptures, is abſolutely neceſſary to the Happineſs we hope for in the other

World; for *without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*; and a Good life is without doubt the beſt Preparation for the Sacrament. So that he that lives like a Chriſtian is fit to *Communicate*, and he that does not is fit for nothing but ruine. How ſtrange an Excuſe then is this, which is ſo often made for Peoples neglect of the Sacrament! For with the very ſame Breath they conclude themſelves to have no reaſonable Hopes of being Sav'd! And ſo long as they continue unfit for the one, they are uncapable of the other! And dare they continue in ſuch a ſtate as this? Would not ſuch thoughts as theſe therefore be more becoming every one that names the Name of Jeſus? "I "am unfit for Heaven, therefore "will I frequent the Sacrament: "Tho' I am Young, and proba-"bly may live for many Years "to come, yet ſince 'tis ſo un-"certain whether I ſhall or no,

"and

" and I can't begin too ſoon to
" fit and prepare my ſelf for a
" happy future ſtate, therefore
" will I addreſs my ſelf to the
" Reception of thoſe conveyances
" of the Divine Grace and Aſ-
" ſiſtance, *without* which I can do
" *nothing*, and *with* which I ſhall
" be able to do every thing that's
" *needful* to be done to my Salva-
" tion, *thro' Chriſt that ſtrength-*
" *neth me.* This will compleat my
" Repentance, confirm and enliven
" my Faith, and in every reſpect
" make my Obedience more ſin-
" cere and full; the more Defects
" therefore in each of theſe I am
" ſenſible of, the more need have
" I to approach that Holy Table,
" where all my Spiritual wants
" ſhall be ſupplyed. *To thee there-*
fore, Bleſſed Saviour, I humbly come for help; that my ſinful Body may be made clean by thy Body, wounded and torn for my Offences, and my Soul waſhed by thy moſt precious Blood, which thou didſt ſhed for the re-

remiſſion of my Sins. I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my polluted Roof; but prepare for thy ſelf an Habitation, by the Influences of thy Bleſſed Spirit, and then, come Lord Jeſus, come quickly.

Having thus Conducted Young Perſons to the Holy Altar, which, unleſs they are extreamly wanting to themſelves, is next to Conducting them to *Heaven*; I ſhall leave them there to the bleſſing of God and our Saviour, who is ready to embrace them with the Arms of his Mercy, and *ſeal* them with his life-giving *Spirit to the Day of Eternal* Redemption.

Only to their own Pious Meditations and Prayers, they may, if they pleaſe, add the following *Litany*.

A

LITANY

FOR

Young Gentlemen.

O *God the Father of Heaven, of Angels and of Men; have Mercy upon us Miſerable Sinners!*

O God the Son, who haſt Redeem'd the World with thy moſt Precious Blood; have Mercy upon us Miſerable Sinners!

O God the Holy Ghoſt, the Lord and giver of Spiritual Heavenly Life; have Mercy upon us Miſerable Sinners!

O Holy, Bleſſed, and Glorious Trinity, whoſe Wiſdom and Power, and Good-

Goodneſs is Infinite; have Mercy upon us Miſerable Sinners!

Remember not, Lord, the Sins and Offences of our Youth, nor be extream to mark what we have done amiſs; Spare us, good Lord, ſpare us a little, that we may recover our ſtrength, and according to thy Mercy think thou upon us for thy goodneſs.

Spare us, good Lord.

From forgetting our Creator in the Days of our Youth; from waſting the flower of our age in vanity and folly, and reſerving our decrepid Years for the Service of God;

Good Lord deliver us.

From valuing the Bleſſings we enjoy more than the Giver of them; from truſting in any thing more than in Providence; and from loving Pleaſure more than thee our God;

Good Lord deliver us.

From

From dishonouring our Bodies with Intemperance and Uncleanness; from polluting our Souls with impure Imaginations; from defiling our Mouths with prophane and impious, or obscene Discourses;

Good Lord deliver us.

From abusing our Reason in opposing Religion; from debasing our Wit to the service of our Lusts; from living like Beasts, when thou hast made us Men and Christians;

Good Lord deliver us.

From excesses of Passion, and a turbulent Spirit; from tormenting our selves because others misuse us; from the guilt and the misery of Malice and Revenge;

Good Lord deliver us.

From Conceit and Pride, Envy and Ambition; from foolish Rashness, and inconsiderate Heat; from despising our Guides

Guides, and following our own Counſel only;

Good Lord deliver us.

From ſtubborn Obſtinacy, and deafneſs to Advice; from contempt of Reproof, and anger at the Reprover; from a blinded Mind, and a ſeared Conſcience;

Good Lord deliver us.

From deadneſs in thy Service, and a formal Religion; from obedicence that is fanciful, humourſome, and uncertain; from a ſuperſtitious uſe, or neglect, of the Ornaments of Worſhip;

Good Lord deliver us.

From forgetting Thee, or our ſelves, in raptures of Enthuſiaſm; from pretending to Piety for the ſake of the World; and from all the Paths that lead to the Portion of Hypocrites;

Good Lord deliver us.

From conforming to the World in the Arts of Deceit; from fawning and flattery;

tery; Cenſure and Detraction; from falſe Smiles and treacherous Friendſhip;

Good Lord deliver us.

From impatience in Trouble, and exceſſive Dejections; from diſtruſt of thy Providence, and Deſperate Courſes; from fretting againſt God, for what we bring upon our ſelves;

Good Lord deliver us.

In all time of Temptation, by Proſperity or Adverſity; in all ſudden Surprizes and imminent Dangers; in the hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment;

O Bleſſed Jeſus! by all that thou haſt done and ſuffered for us, then ſuccour and deliver us.

And tho' unworthy, as we are, and miſerable Sinners, yet encouraged by thy boundleſs Mercy and Goodneſs, we beſeech thee farther to hear us; and as the Guardian and guide of our Youth, ſhew

ſhew us the way that we ſhould walk in, for we lift up our Souls unto thee;

Good Lord, we beſeech thee to hear us.

O that our ways might be directed by thy Commandments, and our footſteps never wander from them! that we might meditate upon thy Precepts, and delight our ſelves in thy Service, and never forget thy Word;

Good Lord, we beſeech thee to hear us.

Thy Hands have made us what we are, from thee comes all we have or hope for; O give us the Underſtanding that we may entirely Praiſe and Love thee, and not be ſtupid and inſenſible as the Beaſts that periſh!

Good Lord, we beſeech thee to hear us.

That it may pleaſe thee to inſpire us with Affections becoming Chriſtians; that we may live worthy of that moſt Holy

Holy Profeſſion, as Diſciples of Jeſus, and deſign'd for Glory!

We beſeech thee to hear us, good Lord.

That our Saviours life may be the rule of ours, that we may tread in his ſteps, and become like him in temper, and ſpend our days as he did, in advancing thy Glory, and doing good in our Generation!

We beſeech thee to hear us, good Lord.

That we may employ our Youth and our Strength, in the great work of our Salvation, and run the way of thy Commandments with vigour and ſpirit, and the warmth and fervour of a chearful Mind!

We beſeech thee to hear us good Lord.

That Religion may be eſteem'd by us as our chief good; that all things elſe may be ſubſervient to it, as the delight and the joy of our hearts!

Good Lord, we beſeech thee to hear us.

That our Faith may be irreproveable, ſteady and modeſt; ſuch as may work by Love and purifie our Hearts, and bring down every thing that exalts it ſelf againſt obedience to Chriſt!

Good Lord, we beſeech thee to hear us.

That with our whole Heart we may devote our ſelves to thy Service; and be ſincerely what we do Profeſs; and value the Joys of a quiet Conſcience, above thouſands of Gold and Silver!

We beſeech thee to hear us, good Lord.

That our Baptiſmal Vow may be kept Inviolate, the Promiſes we have ſince made to thee faithfully perform'd, and all our Pious Reſolutions made good!

We beſeech thee to hear us, good Lord.

O let us not go wrong, thou guide of our ſteps! O let us not fall, thou that

that art our Support! Diſcover to us the ſnares that are laid for our Souls, and grant that we may ever eſcape them!

Good Lord, we beſeech thee to hear us.

And when we are down, Lord, do thou raiſe us up! When we go aſtray like Sheep that are loſt, O ſeek thy Servants, pity our ſad ſtate, and bring us back unto thy fold again!

Good Lord, we beſeech thee to hear us.

We will think on our ways, and turn our feet unto thy Teſtimonies; we will make haſte without delay to keep thy righteous Judgments; with thy aſſiſtance, which we humbly beg, and

Beſeech thee to hear us, good Lord.

But who can tell how often he offendeth! Cleanſe thou us therefore from our ſecret faults, and keep us from

preſumptuous Sins, leſt they get the Dominion over us!

Good Lord, we beſeech thee to hear us.

May we never deſpiſe the Riches of thy long-ſuffering and forbearance; nor by our continu'd impenitence, treaſure up Wrath againſt the day of Wrath; but be intirely ſoftned by thy goodneſs, and ſpeedily led to Repentance!

We beſeech thee to hear us, good Lord.

And may it pleaſe thee to give us that which is Repentance to Salvation, a Godly ſorrow working a thorough amendment of every evil Thought, and Word, and Work!

Good Lord, we beſeech thee to hear us.

That it may pleaſe thee to aſſiſt us in our Addreſſes to thy Holy Altar, where we will again dedicate our ſelves intirely

tirely to thee, and do thou verifie our Offering!

We beſeech thee to hear us, good Lord.

Pity our Infirmities, and prepare our Hearts for the reception of our deareſt Saviour; hearken to the good deſires which thou thy ſelf haſt put into our Minds; and grant that by thy help, they may be brought to good effect, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord!

Good Lord, we beſeech thee to hear us.

And thou, Eternal Son of God, we moſt humbly beſeech thee to hear us!

O ſpotleſs Lamb of God, that takeſt away the Sins of a wretched wicked World, have Mercy upon us, and now and ever grant us thy Peace; we are thine, O therefore ſave us for thy Mercies ſake!

Lord have mercy upon us.
Chriſt have mercy upon us.
Lord have mercy upon us

Our

Our Father which art in Heaven; hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that Treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

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